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## *The Critical Years*



# THE CRITICAL YEARS

*The Reconstitution of the Anglican Church  
in the United States of America: 1780-1789*

BY CLARA O. LOVELAND



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## Preface

IN MOST books on church history, the Church of England in the British Colonies in America becomes, as if by magic, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. No detailed account of the tensions and difficulties involved in the process has been published. This study centers on the period from 1780 through 1789, the most important and probably the least known years. The periods before 1780 and after 1789 have been briefly sketched in so far as they contributed to the understanding of the main problems. An insight into the struggles which preceded the agreement on the form of its government illuminates the basic nature of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

It has been interesting trying to collect source material, either in manuscript or in reliable reprint. The whereabouts of each manuscript used has been given in a footnote, and the location of every letter identified by writer, date, and addressee will be found in the Catalogue of Correspondence. In the bibliography, the five manuscript collections used are given, but not each item. Materials have been listed by dioceses, in the hope that obvious inadequacies may at some time be filled in. Special attention should be called to W. S. Perry, *Historical Notes and Documents Illustrating the Organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America*, which contains an excellent collection of reprints, especially from the papers of Bishop White. The most valuable source for both reprints of manuscripts

and background material is the *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*. In the bibliography, the *Historical Magazine* has been listed twice, because of its dual importance: as a source for reprints, and as a source for background material. The original, fully documented typescript of this study has been deposited in the Library of Duke University.

One of the privileges of graduate work has been the contacts with interesting libraries and helpful librarians. The manuscript letters of the church leaders of 1780-1789 have been collected in seminary and diocesan libraries, and in other private and public libraries as well. Special thanks are due to the staffs of the New York Historical Society, the Morgan Library, and the library of the General Theological Seminary in New York City, of the Massachusetts Diocesan Library in Boston, and of the libraries of Yale University and of the Berkeley Divinity School in New Haven.

An even greater privilege was the contact brought through this study with many of the leading historians in the Protestant Episcopal Church today. Gratitude for encouragement and helpful suggestions is due to Dr. Walter H. Stowe, editor of the *Historical Magazine*, Dr. Edward R. Hardy, Jr., Professor of Church History at Berkeley Divinity School, Dr. G. MacLaren Brydon, Historiographer of the Diocese of Virginia, and Dr. Richard G. Salomon, Professor of Church History at Bexley Hall. Acknowledgement of special indebtedness is made to Dr. Robert Bosher, Professor of Church History at General Theological Seminary, who patiently read the entire manuscript in draft form, and gave invaluable criticism.

My greatest indebtedness, however, is to Dr. H. Shelton Smith, to whose understanding help and sustaining encouragement, the completion of this study is largely due.

CLARA O. LOVELAND

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## *The Critical Years*



## *Introduction: Problems Facing the Church of England in America (1780)*

“<sup>66</sup>THE Church of England has now no longer an existence in the United Colonies of America.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, on August 25, 1776, in his report to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, the Rev. Philip Reading of Delaware voiced his despair for the very life of the Church he served. Fortunately, in spite of the overwhelming difficulties involved in maintaining continuity with the National Church of the recent enemy, many of his fellow churchmen were more sanguine than he. Various plans were proposed, tentative steps taken, until finally the basis for an American Church of the Anglican Communion was secured.

The main problem facing the Anglican clergy at the close of the colonial period concerned church government. As a result of the Declaration of Independence in 1776 the Church of England in America was automatically deprived of its accustomed ecclesiastical system. The Rev. Philip Reading continued in the same letter with the following explanation:

My reason for speaking in this manner is as follows: I look upon the King's supremacy and the constitution of the Church of England to be so intimately blended together that whenever

<sup>1</sup> Philip Reading, Letter to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, August 25, 1776, in William S. Perry (ed.), *Historical Collections relating to the American Colonial Church* (Hartford, Conn.: Church Press, 1871ff.), II, 483. Hereinafter referred to as Perry, *Hist. Coll.* II.

the supremacy is either suspended or abrogated the fences of the Church are then broken down and its visibility is destroyed.

During the Reformation, the stress on the national character of the Church of England had resulted in a very close relation between state and Church. As the same people were held to constitute the commonwealth and the Church, the king, who had supreme jurisdiction politically, also received "the title of headship over the Church, as far as the bounds of this kingdom reach."<sup>2</sup> As long as the Colonies remained part of the British kingdom, the authority of the crown in ecclesiastical matters was duly recognized. The colonial clergy acknowledged the supremacy of the king in the oath of allegiance, required of all Church of England clergy at both ordinations: to the diaconate and to the priesthood. It was as follows:

#### The Oath of the King's Supremacy

I, *A.B.* do swear, that I do from my heart abhor, detest, and abjure, as impious and heretical, that damnable doctrine and position, That Princes excommunicated or deprived by the Pope, or any Authority of the See of Rome, may be deposed or murdered by their subjects, or any other whatsoever. And I do declare, that no foreign Prince, Person, Prelate, State, or Potentate hath, or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, Ecclesiastical or Spiritual, within this Realm. *So help me God.*<sup>3</sup>

The laity acknowledged the supremacy of the king in all their regular services. In the offices of morning and evening

<sup>2</sup> Richard Hooker, *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Bk. VIII, sec. 1, final paragraph. Hereinafter referred to as *Eccles. Pol.*

<sup>3</sup> Quoted from the ordinal of the English Prayer Books of 1662 and 1775, in Walter H. Stowe, "A Study in Conscience: Some Aspects of the Relations of the Clergy to the State," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, XIX (December, 1950), 303. Hereinafter referred to as *Hist. Mag.* All quotations therefrom are used by permission of the publisher.

prayer and in the litany, prayers for the king and royal family were mandatory. The order of Holy Communion required a collect for the king and also a special petition for him in the prayer for the Church militant. When allegiance to the British king was no longer possible for a citizen of the United States, the Church of England in America was left without its accepted supreme governor.

The next in authority in the Church of England was also lacking, as there was no resident bishop in the Colonies. In England the country was divided into dioceses, each under the jurisdiction of a bishop, appointed by the crown. The Archbishop of Canterbury was the Primate of All England, and the Archbishop of York the Primate of England. Each bishop ordained and disciplined the clergy within his own diocese. The need of an American episcopate had long been felt by the colonial Church, but, partly through the indifference in England and partly through strong opposition in the Colonies, no bishop had been sent. Instead, the Anglican churches in the Colonies were considered to be under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London. In 1782, the Rev. William White described the authority of the bishop over the American churches as follows:

This authority was derived under a commission from the crown; which, though destitute of legal operation, found a general acquiescence on the part of the churches; being exercised no farther than to the necessary purposes of ordaining and licensing ministers. Hereby a connection was formed, between the spiritual authority in England and the Episcopal Churches in America, the latter constituting a part of the bishop of London's diocese.\*

When the American Revolution made it impossible to maintain the connection with the Bishop of London, the

\*William White, *The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered* (Philadelphia, 1782), p. 1. Hereinafter referred to as White, *Case*.

colonial clergy were deprived of their direct ecclesiastical superior and of their only source for the ordination of candidates to the ministry.

The two main sources of clergy discipline and guidance were also cut off. From 1689 on, some of the bishops of London had sent commissaries, as their personal representatives, to supervise the churches in the Colonies, some of whom had accomplished a great deal in spite of the difficulties they faced. A steadier control had been exercised by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts over its own missionaries. Each man was required to send semi-annual reports of his work to the secretary of the society in London. Objections to any missionary, as well as appeals for advice or assistance from any missionary, were also sent there. The fact that the missionaries were largely dependent on the London board for their salaries gave the S.P.G. real authority over them. With the coming of the American Revolution, the S.P.G. gradually withdrew all support, financial and otherwise, and no more commissaries were sent from England. The Anglican clergy in America were left without the official directions to which they were accustomed.

The break from England by the Colonies meant the breakdown of their ecclesiastical system to the Anglican churches in America. Left without contact with their superiors and without any diocesan organization of their own, the parishes were forced to act independently in a way that was foreign to the Anglican conception of church government. Of necessity, in the United States the parish replaced the diocese as the basic unit of the Church. Unfortunately, while governed from England, the churches had been so detached and independent of one another that they had had only casual associations. The problem was to establish, as promptly as possible, unity of the widely separated parishes, as it was feared:

that without the creating of some new tie, the churches in the different states, and even those in the same state, might adopt such varying measures as would for ever prevent their being combined in one communion.<sup>5</sup>

It was imperative that they agree on some form of central government in order to continue in the Anglican tradition.

For this purpose such inter-parish contacts as had existed became important. Though infrequent and irregular, voluntary clergy conventions had been held in most of the colonies from the early years of the eighteenth century. The complex and varied relationship of the Church of England to the civil governments created special clergy problems in each colony. As a rule the clergy of one colony met together to work out their own difficulties, but inter-colonial conventions were also held. The few Anglican clergy in New England, where the Church of England minority had to struggle for its existence, had met for mutual advice since 1725. In New York and New Jersey, the Church of England, though a minority group, had managed to become the established Church, and the clergy of both colonies met together frequently. As early as 1704, the Pennsylvania clergy were represented at one of these New York-New Jersey conventions. In 1767, under the leadership of Dr. William Smith, churchmen from the same three colonies organized the Society for the Relief of the Widows and Orphans of Clergymen in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. All of these inter-parish connections were utilized in the period of reorganization of the Church after the Revolution.

Unfortunately, however, the clergy conventions which were held in the colonial period were too casual to unite the separate parishes in the face of the forces that held them apart. The churches were widely scattered, and communica-

<sup>5</sup> William White, *Memoirs of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America* (second edition; New York, 1836), p. 21. Hereinafter referred to as White, *Memoirs*.

tion difficult, as the Colonies had kept in touch with England rather than with each other. The clergy who were dependent on the S.P.G. had different problems and a different point of view from those who were supported by the state or by their local parishioners, with the result that division existed within a colony. The varying church-state relations made the divisions between colonies still more marked. In colonies controlled by nonconformists, the Church of England fought for survival, as in Connecticut. How different the emphasis in colonies where the Church of England had been accepted and approved, either through a long establishment, as in Virginia, or through a friendly and prosperous toleration, as in Pennsylvania! Even between the colonies in which the Church of England was established, there was no strong bond, for in each the clergy were beset with problems of their own. In 1783, Dr. Smith wrote that the Maryland clergy must act alone, as they were "peculiarly circumstanced,"<sup>6</sup> and in 1784, Dr. David Griffith wrote that the Virginia clergy were "so fettered by Laws," that they were unable to cooperate with the Church outside their own state.<sup>7</sup> The break with England left the Anglican churches in America widely scattered, loosely in contact with one another, facing different local problems, with no strong external bond of union.

Besides the lack of an external bond, the parishes of the Church of England lacked uniformity of belief. The variety of interpretations that exist within the Anglican communion, usually a matter of pride, threatened the very existence of the Church in America in the period of reorganization following the Revolution. Only three main streams need be

<sup>6</sup> William Smith, Letter to William White, August 4, 1783, in W. S. Perry (ed.), *A Half Century of the Legislation of the American Church*, Vol. III, *Historical Notes and Documents* (Claremont, N. H., 1874), 22-23, footnote 2. This invaluable collection of reprints of manuscript material will hereinafter be referred to as Perry, *Hist. Notes*. The original of this letter is in the New York Historical Society: hereinafter, N. Y. Hist. Soc.

<sup>7</sup> N. Y. Hist. Soc.



mentioned here. From the seventeenth century on there have always been members of the Church of England who, like Archbishop William Laud, believe in a strong, autocratic ecclesiastical control.<sup>8</sup> There have also been those who, like Archbishop John Tillotson, stress the reasonableness of Christianity, the importance to religion of natural law, with an emphasis on toleration.<sup>9</sup> A third group, like Richard Hooker and John Donne, have tried to maintain central Anglicanism, a middle of the road position, based, not on compromise, but on conviction.<sup>10</sup> All three types of churchmanship are recognized and accepted within the Church of England.

All three existed in the Colonies, each with at least one eloquent spokesman. Samuel Seabury was a Laudian. He had the strong dogmatic convictions of the Connecticut churchmen, and the willingness of the New York churchmen to maintain the Church of England by coercion.<sup>11</sup> William White was a Lockian. Born and educated in prosperous, rational Philadelphia, he had seen Christ Church grow in size and importance without resort to force. His firm support of a contract theory of government was derived from his belief in the importance of natural as well as revealed religion. This same position was held, in the main, by William Smith, provost of the College of Philadelphia, when White was a student there. Samuel Parker represented central Anglicanism. During the strain of the period of reorganiza-

<sup>8</sup> William Laud (1573-1645) became archbishop in 1633.

<sup>9</sup> John Tillotson (1630-1694) became archbishop in 1691.

<sup>10</sup> A. C. Outler, "The Reformation and Classical Protestantism," *The Vitality of the Christian Tradition*, ed. by G. F. Thomas (2d. ed.; New York, 1944), p. 129.

<sup>11</sup> He was inducted as rector of a non-conformist church in Jamaica in 1757 by Governor Hardy, in spite of the protests of the majority of the congregation. (W. J. Seabury, *Memoir of Bishop Seabury* [New York, 1908], chap. IV, pp. 31-50. Hereinafter referred to as Seabury, *Memoir*. All quotations therefrom are used by permission of the publisher.) He was also one of the clergy group who fought for the use of state funds for King's College, a church controlled institution. *Hist. Mag.*, XVI (March, 1947), 85-86.

tion, he remained equally loyal to, and critical of, Seabury and White. When either one took an extreme stand, Parker expressed his disapproval, trying to hold both to the center of the Anglican tradition.<sup>12</sup> Such differences in churchmanship were taken for granted in the Colonies, as in England, until the Revolution. After the Boston Tea Party, December, 1773, the divergent beliefs within the Church clashed openly.

In the first few years of the war, there were three important issues on which the Anglican churchmen took opposite positions. The first was primarily political. The punitive measures of the British government, following the Boston Tea Party, led to the assembling of the First Continental Congress in Philadelphia on September 5, 1774. Some Anglicans actively supported the Congress; others actively opposed it. They disagreed as to what constituted legal, representative government.

Two prominent Philadelphia clergymen were among those who supported the Congress. Dr. William Smith was one of the committee from Philadelphia who, on May 21, 1774, sent a letter to the Boston committee of correspondence, suggesting a "*general congress* of deputies from the different colonies, clearly to state what we conceive to be our rights, and to make a claim or petition of them to his Majesty in firm but decent and dutiful terms," which, it was felt, "would be most agreeable to the people of this province, and is the first step that should be taken."<sup>13</sup> The Rev. Jacob Duché, senior assistant at Christ Church, Philadelphia, gave his support to the First Continental Congress by agreeing to serve as its chaplain. It was he who opened the Congress by prayer, September 4, 1774.

<sup>12</sup> For example: in September, 1786, Parker reproved White for his unwillingness to accept Seabury as bishop. (Perry, *Hist. Notes*, p. 325.) In January, 1788, he reproved Bishop Seabury for his unwillingness to use a slightly modified liturgy. (*Ibid.*, pp. 364-366.)

<sup>13</sup> A. F. Gegenheimer, *William Smith, Educator and Churchman*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1943), p. 161. Hereinafter referred to as Gegenheimer, *Smith*. Used by permission of the publisher.

One of the most active opponents of the Congress was the Rev. Samuel Seabury of Westchester, New York. We learn from him that he was active in opposing

the election of all Committees & Congresses—in pursuance of which object, he rode many days in the county of West Chester; That he assembled the friends of the Government and at their head opposed the lawless meetings and measures of the disaffected. That at one time, in conjunction with his friend Isaac Wilkins, Esq<sup>r</sup>. he assembled near 400 friends of the Government at White Plains, who openly opposed & protested against any Congress, Convention or Committee, & who were determined if possible to support the legal Government of their country.<sup>14</sup>

As a result of the assembly at White Plains, the New York Whigs sent armed forces to prevent any further protest meetings, but Seabury was not to be silenced. In the last two months of 1774, he published three pamphlets anonymously, as A. W. Farmer, the first of which was directed explicitly at the First Continental Congress.<sup>15</sup> In all three Seabury argued for a government by established law, enforced by an autocratic head, as the only guarantee of liberty. The proper procedure for the Colonies was to appeal to the king and parliament through the existing General Assemblies. The Congress, and the committees which were being assembled to follow up its recommendations, were dangerous expressions of lawlessness. From Seabury's point of view, the New York committee was in no way representative of the West-

<sup>14</sup> Samuel Seabury, "Memorial to the British Government in 1783," in Seabury, *Memoir*, p. 187.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Seabury, *Letters of a Westchester Farmer, 1774-1775*, edited by Clarence H. Vance (White Plains, N. Y., 1930). The letters are as follows: "Free Thoughts on the proceedings of the Congress at Philadelphia," published November 16, 1774; "Congress Canvassed, An Address to the Merchant of New York," published November 19, 1774; and "A View of the Controversy between Great Britain and her Colonies," published December 24, 1774, in answer to attacks against him written by Alexander Hamilton, signed "Friend of America." Seabury's last political pamphlet was entitled "An Alarm to the Legislature of New York."

chester farmers. In his fourth and last political pamphlet, published early in 1775, his fear of a republic, his horror of civil war, and his profound desire for reconciliation with Great Britain, were all repeated. Though these Farmer letters of Seabury's were political, the conception of government which they defend is best understood in terms of his concept of the Church. As Church and state were two aspects of one body of people, with the king as the one head, an attack on the king's government was tantamount to an attack on church authority. Seabury stood for strong ecclesiastical control.

Once the fighting between the American and British forces had begun, an ecclesiastical issue was raised, which again divided the colonial Anglicans. The battles of Lexington and Concord in April were followed by the convening of the Second Continental Congress at Philadelphia, May 10, 1775. In June, George Washington was made commander of the American army. Although separation from Britain was not yet sought, the Colonies were definitely in a state of rebellion. The issue for the Anglicans resulted from the declaration by Congress that July 20, 1775, was to be observed by all churches as a day of fasting and prayer. The clergy who opposed Congress as a body of usurpers, denied its right to require a fast day.<sup>16</sup> Seabury refused to open his church, and four months later he was arrested as unfriendly to the American cause.<sup>17</sup> In Annapolis, Maryland, the Rev. Jonathan

<sup>16</sup> This was true, although the majority of Anglican churches were afraid not to comply. At the unanimous request of its members, the Rev. Charles Inglis reluctantly opened Trinity Church, New York, as he hated to show any respect for "usurped authority." (C. Inglis, Letter to the S.P.G., October 31, 1776, in J. W. Lydekker, *Life and Letters of Charles Inglis* [London, 1936], pp. 156-171, especially p. 163.)

<sup>17</sup> Samuel Seabury, "Memorial to the General Assembly of the Governor and Company of the Colony of Connecticut," December 20, 1775, in E. E. Beardsley, *Life and Correspondence of the Right Reverend Samuel Seabury, D.D.* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1881), pp. 36-42, especially p. 38. Hereinafter referred to as Beardsley, *Seabury*.

Boucher planned to open his church in order to preach a pro-British sermon, but he was prevented.<sup>18</sup> Shortly afterwards he fled to England. The fact that the loyalists denied the authority of Congress over the Church, because of loyalty to the King, made them disliked and distrusted by the supporters of the American cause.

The Philadelphia clergy recognized the fast day declared by Congress, but not without serious misgivings. Although they were sympathetic to the American cause, they had no desire to quarrel with their ecclesiastical superiors in England. On June 30, 1775, the six Anglican clergymen then in Philadelphia sent a joint letter to the Bishop of London, in an effort to explain and justify their cooperation with the Continental Congress. Their real distress was apparent from the opening sentence: "We now sit down under deep affliction of mind to address your Lordship upon a subject in which the very existence of our Church in America seems to be interested." They stated that they had decided to respect the day of fasting recommended by the Congress, "and God knows, that exclusive of such recommendation, there never was a time when Prayer and Humiliation were more incumbent upon us."<sup>19</sup> They also informed their bishop that they had decided to take their turn with ministers of other denominations in preaching to the colonial battalions.

To prove his continued loyalty to England, Smith included with the clergy letter a copy of his sermon on freedom,

<sup>18</sup> This sermon was later published in J. Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution, in 13 discourses* (London, 1797), Discourse XXII, p. 562ff. Probably he was prevented from preaching because the previous year he had reclaimed his former church by force, and preached a strong pro-British sermon, with two pistols ready for use, on the pulpit beside him.

<sup>19</sup> Philadelphia Clergy, Letter to the Bishop of London, June 30, 1775, in Perry, *Hist. Coll.* II, 470-471, signed by Richard Peters, William Smith, Jacob Duché, Thomas Coombe, William Stringer, and William White. A similar letter was sent from Delaware, October 1775, signed by Philip Reading, Samuel Tingley and Samuel Magaw. *Ibid.*, pp. 480-481.

preached to the third battalion of volunteer militia of Philadelphia, on June 23, 1775. The following week, Duché preached a sermon which was sent to England for the same reason. He had addressed the "gentlemen of the first battalion of the city and liberties of Philadelphia" on the "Duty of Standing Fast in our Liberties" (Gal. 5:1).<sup>20</sup> The dual loyalty of the Philadelphia clergy was possible, before the signing of the Declaration of Independence, because, as they stated in the explanatory letter to their bishop, it was their constant prayer

that the hearts of good and benevolent men in both Countries may be directed towards a Plan of Reconciliation, worthy of being offered by a great Nation, that have long been the Patrons of Freedom throughout the World; and not unworthy of being accepted by a People sprung from them, and by birth claiming a Participation of their Rights.<sup>21</sup>

In 1776 the situation changed, and a new division was created between the two Anglican groups. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, was published in Philadelphia, January 10, 1776, and on July 4, the Declaration of Independence was signed. Once the definite break had been made, any stand of loyalty to the king became treason to America. The Church of England clergy divided, as all the colonials did, into patriots and loyalists. There was a special problem for the churchmen, however, because of the mandatory prayers for the king and royal family in the church liturgy. As the authority to revise the liturgy of the Church of England was

<sup>20</sup> J. Duché, Sermon of June 30, 1775, in Frank Moore, (ed.), *The Patriot Preachers of the American Revolution* (New York, 1890), pp. 75-89. The sermon contains a glowing tribute to the Congress which seemed so arbitrary and lawless to the loyalists. To Duché it was excellent that there were "three millions of people, or a vast majority of them, bound by no other ties than those of honor and public virtue, voluntarily submitting to the wise political determinations of an honorable council of delegates assembled by their own free and unbiased choice."

<sup>21</sup> Philadelphia Clergy, *op. cit.*

vested in the king and parliament, the loyalist clergy believed they had no choice:

To officiate publicly, and not pray for the King and royal family according to the liturgy, was against their duty and oath, as well as the dictates of their conscience; and yet to use the prayers for the king and royal family would have drawn inevitable destruction on them. The only course they could pursue, to avoid both evils, was to suspend the public exercise of their function, and shut up their churches.<sup>22</sup>

Without consulting each other, all the clergy in Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Long Island, and in the missions of Pennsylvania, closed their churches rather than omit the prayers for the king. The one church open was at Newtown, Connecticut, where the Rev. John Beach continued the regular services, including the royal prayers. Many of the clergy, like Philip Reading of Apoquinimink, Delaware, and Thomas Barton of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, while refusing to conduct services, remained at their posts, visiting the sick, baptizing and instructing their congregations. Charles Inglis of Trinity Church, New York, pursued the same course as long as possible, while actively opposing the American cause. Some substituted readings from the Old and New Testaments for the usual church services. Omitting the royal prayers was considered treasonable by the loyalist clergy, an unauthorized alteration of the official liturgy of the Church of England.

The patriot clergy did not want to alter the liturgy, but they did want to support the American cause. Acting independently of each other, most of them, like Edward Bass of Newburyport, Massachusetts, decided to continue their regular services, omitting the royal prayers. In some cases the

<sup>22</sup> C. Inglis, Letter to the S.P.G., October 31, 1776, in Lydekker, *op. cit.*, p. 160. In the spring of 1776, Inglis had refused to omit the royal prayers when George Washington attended service at Trinity Church, New York. Used by permission of the publisher.

same decision was reached on the explicit recommendation of the vestry, as in Christ Church, Philadelphia, and Trinity Church, Boston. In Virginia and in Maryland more drastic action was taken: prayers for the new states were substituted for the royal prayers by order of the state legislatures. The position of this group was summarized in retrospect by Bishop White, in his *Memoirs of the Church*:

With all possible tenderness to the plea of conscientious scruples, it will not be rash to affirm, that there was no ground for them in the promise—not an oath, as some suppose, although of equal solemnity—made previously to ordination in the Church of England. The candidate declares “That the Book of Common Prayer, and of ordering of bishops, priests and deacons, containeth in it nothing contrary to the word of God; and it may lawfully so be used; and that he himself will use the form in said book prescribed in public prayer and administration of the sacraments, and no other.

In general, Bishop White continued, the promise should be kept,

But there occurs a case, in which there is an external necessity of omitting a few petitions, not involved in any Christian duty; so far as civil rulers are identified by name, or other personal description. In such a case, it seems evident, that the promise is most nearly complied with, by use of the liturgy to the extent which the external necessity permits.

The patriot clergy made such adaptations as seemed to them necessary and right, with no feeling of having departed from the established liturgy of their Church.

As the war progressed, the contrast between the two theories of government at stake became sharper. Both found support within the Anglican Church in America. Patriot churchmen supported the democratic concept. William White, who served as chaplain to the American Congress,



was their strongest spokesman. Loyalist Anglicans, like Samuel Seabury, who served as chaplain to the British forces in New York, ardently supported the monarchical theory. For both men the divergent theories were as applicable to Church as to civil government.

On September 28, 1777, Seabury preached a sermon to His Majesty's Provincial Troops in camp at Kingsbridge, on one of the most popular texts of the loyalists: "Fear God. Honor the King" (I Pet. 2:17). His main thesis was that "the grand relative Duty, so far as civil Society is concerned, is that which all Men owe to the Government under which God's Providence hath placed them." Men's duty of submission was so absolute for Seabury that he doubted the right of the colonists to pass judgment on the king. He continued:

Our Duty to obey our Rulers and Governors arises from our Duty to obey God. He has commanded us to obey Magistrates; to honor all Men according to their Degree in Authority. . . . He hath ordained the powers that are. . . . He hath told us that if we resist this Power, we resist his Ordinance. . . . The fear of God, therefore, . . . will make us obey all the lawful Commands of those who have Rule over us.

The sermon ended with a long exhortation to the soldiers, as "God's instruments," and the prayer: "God grant that you may see a speedy End to all your Troubles, in the Suppression of this unnatural Rebellion and in the Restoration of Peace, Order and legal Government!"<sup>23</sup> Seabury spoke for those who believed that true liberty could exist only under a rule of law, established and enforced by those at the head, whose authority was derived directly from God.

The group represented by White also believed in a rule of law, but rejected autocratic enforcement. Legal government, as resting on the will of God, depended on the consent of

<sup>23</sup> Samuel Seabury, *St. Peter's Exhortation to fear God and to honor the King* (New York, 1777.) [Yale University Library].

the governed. The social compact theory of government, advanced by John Locke to justify the English revolution of 1688, was applied to the American cause. When a tyrannical government invaded the natural rights of man, revolution was justified. An example of this point of view is found in White's *Sermon on the Duty of Civil Obedience as required in Scripture* (Rom. 13:1.2), first preached November 5, 1775, and twice later. He spoke of the American Revolution as

an event that had its origin, not in a desire on our part to remove the established landmarks of law or of prerogative; but in an attachment to invaded rights, which had been handed down to us from the first settlers of the country.

White opposed the resistance "of a government which, having been established by the general will, involved in itself a peaceable means of remedying any imperfections," and called for "submission to public measures . . . unequivocally supported by legitimate declarations of the general will." His primary religious emphasis was on man's moral response, rather than on God's revealed will. He appealed to man's sense of obligation to God's laws and apprehension of His judgments, which "have always been the best cement of social life and the best security of public and private rights." The different theories of government defended by Seabury and White in their sermons preached during the war, were a major obstacle in the problem of achieving agreement in the period of the reorganization of the government of their Church.

The Church of England in the Colonies was seriously weakened by the lack of unity, external and internal, revealed or created by the Revolution. By 1780, it was badly depleted in numbers and leadership. Until such time as the records of every colonial parish have been studied, exact statistics are impossible, but the general picture is clear.

There was a dearth of clergy, partly because no new ordinations were possible, and partly because many prominent Tory sympathizers had been forced to leave the country. New York, which during the British occupation served as a refuge for the loyalist clergy, lost Dr. Myles Cooper and Dr. Samuel Auchmuty in 1775. New Jersey lost Dr. Thomas B. Chandler for the duration of the war. In 1776, Virginia lost the leadership of Dr. John Camm, president of William and Mary College, and three of his faculty. About one hundred twenty-two clergy remained in the state, of whom one hundred are known to have supported the American cause. Jonathan Boucher fled from Maryland in 1775, and by 1776 the number of Anglican clergy had been reduced from forty-four to twelve. In Delaware, one clergyman continued regular services without the royal prayers, and three others suspended services but remained active in their pastoral duties. William White was at one time the only Church of England clergyman in Pennsylvania. Reporting on the situation in New England, Samuel Parker wrote that he was alone in Boston, with only three other clergymen left in Massachusetts. Rhode Island had three churches, but no clergy; New Hampshire, two churches with one minister. Connecticut was the strongest, with fourteen of twenty missionaries still there, as well as seven other clergymen.

There was also a falling off of church members during the Revolution, a fact that is obvious but impossible to estimate accurately. In some cases the loyalist laity left the country with their rectors, as did many of the members of King's Chapel, Boston, with the Rev. Henry Caner. Some deserted the Church of England because it was unpopular and under suspicion as the National Church of the enemy. In the southern states, in which other denominations had been forced to pay taxes in support of an Anglican establishment, their pent-up antagonism was loosed. In Virginia the fight against the Church of England was so violent that its survival in any

form seemed doubtful. Throughout the Colonies, the Church of England was badly crippled.

Actually, there was no place in the independent United States of America for the politico-ecclesiastical system of the established Church of England. It was a transformed Church that survived, strong in the Anglican tradition, but strongly American, too. New leaders appeared, new bonds were created, and a new type of government was adopted within the Anglican communion. The difficult process of reorganizing the Church of England in the Colonies as the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America consumed nine years: 1780-1789. The actions of the churchmen during those years, which hindered or helped in the reorganization process, form the basis of this study.

*The Beginnings of Reorganization: First  
Things First (1780-83)*

THE Revolutionary War made the continued existence of the Church of England in the Colonies impossible, because of its politico-ecclesiastical system. No longer could the King of England be accepted as the supreme governor of the Church, nor could the American clergy place themselves under the jurisdiction of an English bishop. In order to continue in the Anglican tradition, the churches following the English usage had to work out a new form of government. The lack of any resident bishop left the churches with no duly authorized governing body and no widely recognized leadership. So serious was the situation that even before the end of the war efforts were made to insure the survival of the faith, order, and worship of the Church of England. In three of the colonies—Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut—-independent attempts at reorganization were launched during the years 1780-1783. The three approaches to the problem were fundamentally different, as the primary emphasis of each was upon the aspect of church government which seemed most important to the churchmen of the colony from which it came.

The first effort to organize an independent Anglican Church in the United States came in Maryland in 1780. The problems faced by the churchmen at that time were rooted in a long history of controversy. In 1692 the Church of Eng-

land was declared the established Church of Maryland, not by the will of the people, but by order of the English king. In theory, the Bishop of London had the right of ecclesiastical supervision, but he had no power. The attempts of his vigorous commissaries to strengthen the Church met with strong opposition. Real control over the Church of England in Maryland was exercised by the proprietor, through his representative the governor, and by the civil legislative body. The proprietor claimed the sole patronage over the Church, as he alone had the authority to induct the clergy to their livings. He opposed all other claims, even that of the right of ecclesiastical supervision.<sup>1</sup>

In 1763, by order of Governor Eden, acting on instructions from the proprietor, the Anglican clergy were forbidden to hold any future clergy conventions, because they had petitioned the Bishop of London for a resident American bishop. The authority of the civil legislative body over the Church lay in the fact that they fixed the rate of taxes for the clergy salaries—a perennial source of controversy. They were under constantly increasing pressure from the growing non-Anglican Protestant Churches to undermine the establishment. The laymen sought more control for themselves. They fought for the rights of the Church in the legislature, and opposed the arbitrary inductions of the proprietor, on the grounds that they had built and endowed their own churches.<sup>2</sup> Anti-clericalism was intensified in Maryland by the controversies for control of the Church of England in the colonial period.

In 1776, when Maryland broke with England to take her stand with the other American states in the war for independence, responsibility for the survival of the Church of England fell heavily on the laity. Even the nominal relation

<sup>1</sup> N. W. Rightmyer, "The Character of the Anglican Clergy of Colonial Maryland," in *Hist. Mag.* XIX (June, 1950), 112-132.

<sup>2</sup> T. B. Chandler, Letter to the Bishop of London, 1764, in Hawks, *Maryland*, pp. 249-250.

of the churches with the Bishop of London was destroyed. The governor was forced to return to England, and all connection with the proprietor was broken. Before the end of the year, the state legislature withdrew all support from the Church of England, and increased its pressure against the Anglican clergy. The Maryland Declaration of Rights, passed November 3, 1776, accepted the principle of religious freedom.<sup>3</sup> Tax-supported clergy salaries ceased. At the same time an oath of loyalty to the new state was required, and prayers for the new state were ordered substituted for the royal prayers. The result was a clergy exodus.<sup>4</sup> In Maryland, however, the churches were not destroyed nor their lands confiscated. The Declaration of Rights explicitly stated that "the churches, chapels, glebes, and all other property now belonging to the church of England, ought to remain to the church of England for ever."<sup>5</sup> The question arose as to the legal heir of the Church of England, which had no bishop, no ecclesiastical government, and diminished clergy leadership in Maryland.

In 1779, the state legislature passed a Vestry Act, providing for the elections of vestries in all existing parishes, to serve as trustees of the property belonging to them as Church of England. The clergy were made dependent on voluntary gifts of their parishioners, plus the support derived from their glebes. Thus, the identity of the Anglican churches in Maryland with the Church of England was legally recognized, but on a peculiar basis: the laity had complete control.

Into this situation came the very able Dr. William Smith, who moved from Philadelphia, in 1779, to become rector at

<sup>3</sup> *Maryland Declaration of Rights, November 3, 1776 in Proceedings of the Conventions of the Province of Maryland held at the city of Annapolis in 1774, 1775, 1776* (Baltimore, 1836), p. 314, paragraph 33.

<sup>4</sup> Before the war there were 44 well-supported parishes in Maryland. In 1776, 32 clergymen left the state, withdrew from their parishes or died. Hawks, *Maryland*, pp. 282, 283.

<sup>5</sup> *Maryland Declaration of Rights*, p. 314, paragraph 33.

Chestertown, Maryland. On November 9, 1780, he called a meeting for the purpose of organizing the Anglican churches in Maryland into an official body—a meeting which scrupulously observed the proscriptions of the law.<sup>6</sup> It was attended by twenty-four prominent laymen and three clergymen, and so could not be considered a clergy convention.<sup>7</sup>

In an effort to ease the financial strain which had resulted from the loss of tax support, the group decided to petition the legislature for the passage of a law for the public support of all denominations, as legally permitted in the Maryland Declaration of Rights. The petition was carefully worded. Concerning the recent disestablishment of the Church of England, and their desire for a general tax, the group stated:

That the Delegates of this State, at the *great Era of our Independence*, in free and full *Convention* assembled, for the Purpose of establishing a *new Constitution and Form of Government*, upon the Authority of the People, appearing in their Wisdom to have considered some Parts of the said Laws as inconsistent with that *Religious Liberty and Equality of Assessment*, which they intended as the basis of their future Government; Did, by the 33rd Section of the DECLARATION OF RIGHTS, abrogate all such Laws theretofore passed, as enabled any County Courts, on the Application of Vestry-men and Church-wardens, to make Assessments or Levies for support of the Religious Establishment; but not with a View of being less attentive than their pious Ancestors had been, to the Interests of RELIGION, LEARNING, and GOOD MORALS. On the contrary . . . an express Recommendation and Authority are given to future

\* "Notices and Journals and the remains of Journals of two preliminary and the first five annual Conventions of clergy and laity in Maryland," reprinted as the appendix of the *Maryland Journal of Conventions*, for 1855 (Baltimore, 1855), from the original papers and pamphlets of the Rev. William West in the Maryland Diocesan Library. Hereinafter referred to as Maryland, *Journals*.

<sup>7</sup> Governor Eden's order of 1763, forbidding all clergy conventions, had never been repealed. There was uncertainty in this period as to whether or not it was in force.



Legislatures, "At their *Discretion*, to lay a *general and equal* Tax, for the support of the Christian Religion." <sup>8</sup>

They also asked for permission for each vestry to tax their own church pews from time to time, to help defray the cost of the upkeep of their church. Because of the Vestry Act of 1779, which had given legal recognition only to the vestries individually, the petitioning was not done by the group as such, but by "the separate Act of a very considerable number of Vestries, wholly in their Lay Character." <sup>9</sup> The same petition, however, was sent to the General Assembly of Maryland from all the vestries. Before any action was taken, the petition was withdrawn, for "finding the public Difficulties encreasing," the petitioners asked that "all further Consideration of the matter, might be postponed to a Time of less Distress and Danger." <sup>10</sup> The name selected by this group to replace "Church of England" was "The Protestant Episcopal Church," a familiar phrase used for the first time as the title of the denomination.

No further action towards preserving the Anglican Church in Maryland was taken until after the independence of the United States had been recognized in the preliminary peace treaty signed with England. On May 6, 1783, the recommendations of the 1780 convention were brought to the attention of the Maryland legislature by Governor William Paca, a former pupil of Dr. Smith's. About a week later, a copy of the governor's address fell into the hands of the

<sup>8</sup> *An Address to the Members of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland* (Baltimore, 1784), p. 4. Hereinafter referred to as *Maryland Address*. The final quotation is from the *Maryland Declaration of Rights*, *op. cit.*, p. 314. The *Maryland Address* was printed in pamphlet form after the Maryland Church Convention of June 22, 1784. Besides the record of that meeting, it included the petition of the vestries to the Assembly of 1780, the clergy petition of 1783, the Declaration of fundamental rights of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland of 1783, with a covering letter to Governor Paca and his reply, and interpretative comments.

<sup>9</sup> *Maryland Address*, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

Episcopal clergy, assembled informally at the first commencement of Washington College, of which Dr. Smith was president. Encouraged by the government's expressed concern for religion, the clergy decided that the time had come for them to meet in a clergy council, to consider

What Alterations might be necessary in our Liturgy and Service; and how our Church might be organized, and a Succession in the Ministry kept up, so as to be an Object of public Notice and Support, in common with other Christian Churches under the Revolution.<sup>11</sup>

The first step was to petition the assembly for permission to hold a clergy council. Every precaution was taken not to lose the recognition of the Maryland churches as the legal heirs of the Church of England:

It was considered that some *Legislative Interposition* or *Sanction* might probably be necessary in the Course of this Business; for as our Church derived her Liturgy from the Church of England, and was formerly dependent on the same Church for a *Succession* in her Ministry, and had certain Property reserved to her by the Constitution of this State, under the Name of the *Church of England*; it became a question whether, if any *Alterations* should be made in the *Liturgy*, or in the Mode of *Succession* in the *Ministry*, she could any longer be considered as the Church described in the *Constitution of this State*, or entitled to the perpetual Use of the Property aforesaid.<sup>12</sup>

The petition to the Maryland Assembly for permission to hold a clergy convention for the purpose of incorporating the Protestant Episcopal churches of Maryland brought forth a storm of protest, in the legislature and in the newspapers. The leader of the opposition was a Presbyterian, Dr. Patrick

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-7.

Allison, who used the pen name "Vindex." The objections to the clergy petition were forcefully stated in his pamphlet, *Candid Animadversions on a Petition presented to the General Assembly of Maryland by the Rev. Dr. William Smith and the Rev. Thomas Gates*.<sup>13</sup> The main objection was to the fact that the Episcopal churches sought state authority to organize. Such "illicit commerce with civil power" was likely to lead to special privilege, if not to an establishment.<sup>14</sup> Why should state permission be asked in matters of a spiritual nature? Besides the danger of a state church being established, there was the danger of setting a precedent of state interference, which might be applied to other churches. The real issue, not mentioned in the petition, was the right to retain all Church of England property. The Revolution had made it difficult to determine what constituted the Church of England in Maryland, a situation which would be still further confused if liturgical revisions were made. The Episcopal churches had the same rights as all other denominations, and, rightly or wrongly, they had not been required to make restitution of property "unjustly gained."<sup>15</sup> Surely the clergy should have worked out their needs on purely spiritual grounds, without appealing for state sanction. In September, 1783, Dr. Smith wrote an article, which was published in both newspapers, addressed to Dr. Allison.<sup>16</sup> He emphasized the desire of the Episcopalians that their ownership of the Church of England property be legal, and, to prove that they did not want any special privileges from the state, he included the recently drawn up

<sup>13</sup> "Vindex," *Candid Animadversions on a Petition presented to the General Assembly of Maryland by the Rev. Dr. William Smith and the Rev. Thomas Gates*, first published in 1783. (Baltimore, 1793.) Republished "in consequence of a prevailing Demand for them." The controversy was also continued in the newspapers. Cf. *The Baltimore Journal*, Vol. XIX, Nos. 61 and 67, November 5 and 7, 1792, for two acrimonious articles by "Vindex."

<sup>14</sup> "Vindex," *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. v.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, Vol. X, 64, September 16, 1783, and *Maryland Gazette* I, #19, September 19, 1783.

statement of what they considered their fundamental rights as a church.<sup>17</sup> The opposition continued to publish their objections through September and October in the weekly *Gazette*.<sup>18</sup>

Permission for the clergy meeting was granted by the assembly, but due to the insecurity of the church in Maryland, reorganization was attempted strictly on a state basis. On August 4, 1783, Dr. Smith wrote to his former pupil and colleague, the Rev. William White of Philadelphia, that the Maryland clergy

did not think it proper, nor that we were authorized, to call any Clergy to our assistance from the neighboring States—that the Episcopal Clergy of Maryland were in some respects peculiarly circumstanced, and, ought, in the first instance, to have a preparatory Convention or Conference, to consider and frame a DECLARATION of their own Rights as one of the Churches of a separate and independent State.

Questions of a form of government, unity among the Maryland clergy, and "some few" alterations in the liturgy were to be considered, and authority sought

to open a correspondence on the subject with the Clergy of the neighboring States, and to have some speedy future and more general meeting with the Clergy of those States, or Committees from them, to unite if possible in the alterations made, which many among us think cannot have a full Church Ratification, till we have on some plan or another the three Orders of Bishops, Priests and Deacons to concur in the same.

<sup>17</sup> *A Declaration of certain fundamental Rights and Liberties of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland*, drawn up by the convention that met at Annapolis, August 13, 1783. The original, with signatures, is in the Hawks' collection of Smith papers. An original printed copy is bound with the early journals in the Maryland Diocesan Library. It is discussed in some detail in the pages that follow, with page references to the *Maryland Address*, previously cited, of which it formed part.

<sup>18</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, I, 18-22, September 12 through October 10, 1783. Also *The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, X, October 3 and 10, 1783.

The letter closed by emphasizing the necessity of securing ratification by the State Assembly of the proposed changes, or else the assurance that it was unnecessary, lest, in reorganizing, the Maryland churches lose their rights to Church of England property.

The clergy convention met on August 13, 1783, at Annapolis—eighteen clergymen attending.<sup>19</sup> Two important documents were produced. The first was an Act of Incorporation, to be submitted to the State Assembly, to enable the Episcopal churches in Maryland to own land and goods as a corporate body.<sup>20</sup> State recognition of the Episcopal churches as heirs to the Church of England raised an important ecclesiastical question. In keeping with the Maryland Declaration of Rights, the principle of a state controlled Church had to be abandoned. Could a church government, independent of the state, be set up without sacrificing its identity with the Church of England? On what essential characteristics of the Church of England was the claim to continuity based?

The answer of the Maryland clergy was given in their second document, "A Declaration of certain fundamental Rights and Liberties of the Protestant Church of Maryland."<sup>21</sup> The declaration began with an introductory appeal to the statement in the Maryland Constitution by which the Church of England had been disestablished: that "all Persons professing the *Christian Religion*, are equally entitled to Protection in their Religious Liberty." Four claims were made, as essential to the Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland, "heretofore denominated the Church of England, as by Law established." The first claim was for the right to complete and preserve

<sup>19</sup> *Maryland Address*, p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Act of Incorporation, *ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>21</sup> Declaration of Rights, *ibid.*, pp. 9-11.

those purely *spiritual Powers* . . . which being derived only from Christ and his Apostles, are to be maintained *independent* of every *foreign* or other Jurisdiction, so far as may be consistent with the civil Rights of Society.

Having thus made it clear that independence from England was to mark the Maryland church, in their second claim, the clergy emphasized its continuity with the Church of England on the basis of orders. They stated:

That ever since the *Reformation*, it hath been the received Doctrine of the Church whereof we are members (and which by the Constitution of this State is entitled to the perpetual Enjoyment of certain Property and Rights under the Denomination of the Church of England) "That there be these *three Orders of Ministers* in CHRIST'S Church, *Bishops, Priests* and *Deacons*, and that an *Episcopal Ordination and Commission* are necessary to the valid Administration of the Sacraments, and the due Exercise of the Ministerial Functions in the said Church.

Their third claim was a more explicit statement of their right to have and to continue the three orders of ministers, which, regardless of the usages of other denominations, were essential to them. Though their purely spiritual functions were stressed, a very practical application was made. The Maryland clergy asked that no one without regular Episcopal ordination be allowed to use any of the property

formerly belonging to the Church of England, in this State, and which by the Constitution and Form of Government is secured to the said Church forever, by whatever Name she, the said Church, or her Superior Order of Ministers, may in future be denominated.

Continuity with the Church of England was to be maintained not only in the matter of orders, but also by the continued use of the Prayer Book, which, however, would have

to be revised. The last claim made in the Declaration was that it would be

the Duty, of the said Church, when duly organized, constituted, and represented in a *Synod* or *Convention* of the different Orders of her Ministry and People, to revise her Liturgy, Forms of Prayer, and public Worship, in order to adapt the same to the late *Revolution* and other local Circumstances of America, which it is humbly conceived, may and will be done, without any other or farther Departure from the venerable Order and beautiful Forms of Worship of the Church from whence we were sprung, than may be found expedient in the Change of our Situation from a DAUGHTER to a SISTER-CHURCH.

Authority to revise the Prayer Book was to be transferred from the king and Parliament to the Protestant Episcopal Church as a whole, meeting in general convention, with representatives of the three orders of the ministry and also of the laity. The revisions necessitated by the Revolution would not constitute a change of denomination.

How was the valid Episcopal ordination, on which the Maryland clergy insisted, to be secured? This problem had been under consideration for some time. In 1779 the authority of the state over the Church had been so taken for granted that the legislature, consisting of men of various denominations, had planned to appoint ordainers to the ministry for the Episcopal Church.<sup>22</sup> Through the intervention of the Rev. Samuel Keene, the proposal had been abandoned. No further action had been taken, until the Clergy Convention of 1783 took two constructive steps to meet the great need of new clergy for the Maryland churches.

First, "until a regular Ordination of Clergy could be obtained," six clergymen were appointed

to examine such young Gentlemen as may offer themselves Candidates for Holy Orders in our Church: Such Examination to

<sup>22</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 92.

respect their *moral* Character, their Knowledge in the learned Languages, and Divinity, and their Attachment to the Doctrines of the Christian Religion as professed and taught in our Church.<sup>23</sup>

Candidates who successfully passed their examinations were to serve as readers in any parishes that cared to employ them. Not having been ordained, they were to leave

such Parishes, as to the Administration of the Sacraments, and other proper Functions of the *clerical Character*, to the more immediate Direction of such neighboring Clergymen, as may agree to visit them occasionally for that Purpose.<sup>24</sup>

In the second place, the Maryland clergy elected Dr. William Smith "*to go to Europe to be ordained an antistes*, President of the Clergy, or Bishop (if that name does not hurt your feelings.)" <sup>25</sup> Though no mention of the election was included in the published minutes of the meeting, the testimonials, which he was to have presented to the English bishops, signed by his fellow clergymen and by Governor Paca, were preserved by Dr. Smith.

Later the opposition to him became so strong that he never was consecrated, but on September 20, 1783, it seemed probable that he would be consecrated and back in Maryland by "some time next Spring." <sup>26</sup> As 1783 drew to a close, the Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland, in spite of determined opposition, seemed well on its way to being the legal and spiritual inheritor of the Church of England. In Maryland the reorganization process had begun, strictly on a state basis.

While the Maryland clergy were thus engaged in trying to save the Protestant Episcopal Church within their state, the

<sup>23</sup> *Maryland Address*, p. 14.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 15.

<sup>25</sup> T. J. Claggett, Letter to William Duke. September 20, 1783, in *Maryland, Journals*, p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*



Rev. William White of Philadelphia proposed a plan for preserving all the Anglican churches on a federal basis. On August 8, 1782, he published a pamphlet entitled *The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered*,<sup>27</sup> the purpose of which was summarized on the fly-leaf in a quotation from Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*:

To make new articles of faith and doctrine, no man thinketh it lawful; new laws of government, what commonwealth or church is there which maketh not at one time or another? <sup>28</sup>

The pamphlet, according to White, presented a plan which fully preserved the faith, doctrine, and worship of the Church of England, while changing its form of government to meet the new political situation in the United States.<sup>29</sup>

White began by emphasizing the imperative need for a new form of government for the Episcopal churches in the States, free of foreign jurisdiction. The pamphlet was published after active hostilities had ceased, but before Great Britain had recognized the United States as a sovereign nation. The American Episcopal churches, as White pointed out, were actually without any government. It was no longer possible for their clergy to accept even nominal supervision by the Bishop of London. American candidates could not be ordained without a special provision for omitting the oath of allegiance to the British Crown, and even such purely

<sup>27</sup> William White, *The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered* (Philadelphia, 1782). Hereinafter referred to as *White, Case*. Page references are to the copy in the library of General Theological Seminary, New York City, known as Bishop White's copy, as it contains some manuscript corrections in his handwriting. A new, carefully annotated edition of this treatise has recently been published: Richard G. Salomon, *William White's "The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered"* (Philadelphia: The Church Historical Society, 1954, Publication No. 39).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, on the flyleaf. Quoted from *Eccles. pol.*, Bk. III, sec. 10.

<sup>29</sup> White explained at the beginning of his treatise that he used the general term "Episcopal" to apply "to the churches professing the religious principles of the Church of England." (*White, Case*, p. 5, footnote.)

spiritual dependence would place the Episcopalians under suspicion of foreign influence. Nor could state legislatures continue to control the churches, as all church establishments had been abrogated by the Revolution. For the right to reorganize, yet to remain the same Church, White quoted the thirty-fourth article of religion of the Church of England: "Every particular or national church hath authority to ordain, change and abolish ceremonies and rites of the church, ordained only by man's authority, so that all things be done to edifying." <sup>30</sup> In his opinion, one possibility remained:

All former jurisdiction over the churches being thus withdrawn, and the chain which held them together broken, it would seem, that their future continuance can be provided for only by voluntary associations for union and good government.<sup>31</sup>

The plan proposed by White for the Episcopal churches was based on John Locke's theory of government, on which the political framework of the United States was being formed. As a prominent Philadelphian, White was in close contact with the statesmen who were working out the practical applications of their new political insights in building a federal government. He himself had studied the works of Locke at Philadelphia College, and was strongly influenced by his philosophy. As the problem of unifying and governing the disconnected churches paralleled the problem confronting the Colonies, it was natural that the procedure suggested by White for the Church should be similar to that proposed by the statesmen for the state.

The type of church government advocated by White was adapted to the American scene in more than political theory. White had no interest in mere speculation, "without attention to the sentiments, habits, and circumstances of the people

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7. Quoted from the English Prayer Book of 1662.

<sup>31</sup> White, *Case*, p. 8.

interested.”<sup>32</sup> The changes which he recommended followed logically from the contract theory of government which he accepted, but they also arose naturally from the particular situation of the Episcopal churches in the United States. For instance, the proposal that the churches should be governed through voluntary associations, grew out of the necessity of breaking away from state control. The fact that the parishes in America had grown up as independent entities led him to suggest that the parish should be the basic unit of organization, and not the diocese as in England. All parishes were to be regarded as equal, each one retaining “every power that need not be delegated for the good of the whole.”<sup>33</sup> The difficulty of transportation over the country at large suggested a three-fold organization. Nearby churches were to gather as often as occasion required in small district meetings. Once a year several of the smaller groups were to come together in a large district meeting. Every three years a general convention of representatives from each of the larger districts would be held. Thus, with the minimum of inconvenience from the long distances, each parish would be represented at national triennial conventions.

The change proposed by White in the first half of his treatise, which later proved most controversial, also grew out of the particular situation of the Episcopal churches in America. The governing body of the Church was to include laity who would convene with the clergy.<sup>34</sup> In the majority of cases, the churches had been established and maintained in the Colonies by laymen who were accustomed to some control of their parishes through their vestries. To White it seemed only natural that clergy and laymen should decide church policies jointly. He pointed out that in England the laity had authority in ecclesiastical matters through Parlia-

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

ment. In support of the principle of lay representation, he quoted twice from Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*. The first was a long quotation, stating that though it was natural for bishops and pastors to make the laws for the Church, as being wiser in religious matters, nevertheless "it is the general consent of all that giveth them the form and vigour of laws." The second stated that to let the clergy make all laws would be injurious to other men.<sup>35</sup> To make clear that this group which included the laity was to be the final authority for the Church, White specifically mentioned that they would be the ones to elect bishops (as had been done in the primitive Church) and to deprive them. As there were no means of support for them in the American churches, the bishops were to supervise only small districts, which would not interfere with their parochial duties. Through their local vestries as well as through the General Convention, the bishops would be subjected to lay control.

To replace the oath of loyalty to the king and Church in the ordination service, White suggested that in the American Church it would suffice to have the clergy acknowledge the Scriptures as a rule of life. They might also accept, in general, the thirty-nine Articles of Religion, and profess their approval of the doctrine, worship, and government of the Church. Whatever statement was subscribed to, White believed should be "rather as a chain of union, than for exacting entire uniformity of sentiment," in keeping with the original intention of the compilers of the Articles of Faith, who "designedly left room for a considerable latitude of sentiment."<sup>36</sup>

The problem of altering the liturgy, which had been such

<sup>35</sup> White, *op. cit.*; *Eccles. Pol.* Bk. VIII, sec. 8. "But were it so that the clergy might give laws to all the rest, forasmuch as every estate doth desire to enlarge the bounds of their own liberties, it is easy to see how injurious this would prove to men of other conditions."

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

a controversial issue during the Revolution, White touched on carefully. He wrote in his pamphlet:

As to divine worship, there must no doubt be somewhere the power of making necessary and convenient alterations in the service of the church. But it ought to be used with great moderation; otherwise the communion will become divided into an infinite number of smaller ones, all differing from one another and from that in England. . . . Whatever may in other respects be determined on this head, it is presumed that Episcopalians are generally attached to that characteristic of their communion, which prescribes a settled form of prayer.<sup>37</sup>

Though he was not certain where the authority to make the necessary changes lay, he was convinced that they must be made in such a way as to avoid diversification. The acceptance of a common liturgy would constitute an important bond in the voluntary association of the Episcopal churches on a federal basis.

Having completed the outline of his proposed frame of church government in the first three chapters, White devoted the last three to his concept of episcopacy. He believed that the episcopal form of government should be retained by the American churches but that, in the beginning, it would have to be without consecration in the line of the apostolic succession.<sup>38</sup> As usual his suggestion was rooted in the practical situation. It seemed clear to him that the American churchmen preferred the episcopal form, since in spite of the inconveniences involved and the freedom to do as they pleased

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>38</sup> "The conduct meant to be recommended . . . is to include in the proposed frame of government a general approbation of Episcopacy, and a declaration of an intention to procure the succession, as soon as conveniently may be; but in the meantime to carry the plan into effect without waiting for the succession." (*Ibid.*, p. 17.)

Wherever these churches have been erected, the ecclesiastical government of the church of England has been adhered to; they have depended on the English bishops for ordination of their clergy, and on no occasion expressed a dissatisfaction with Episcopacy.<sup>39</sup>

On the other hand, the introduction of a bishop in America had not been sought by the laity, probably for fear he would bring with him from England ecclesiastical laws and civil powers which "would include principles and produce consequences, dangerous to their civil rights."<sup>40</sup> The solution in White's opinion, was to set up a democratic episcopal government such as he believed had existed in the early Church, where "it was customary to debate and determine in a general concourse of all christians in the same city; among whom the Bishop was no more than a president."<sup>41</sup> The new episcopacy was to be built, not on the English monarchical principle, but on American lines.

His proposal to set up an American Episcopate without waiting to procure the succession White explained as the result of practical necessity. The strained political relations between England and the United States made it "indelicate" even to ask for consecration from the parent Church. To seek it from people of different language and habits, and perhaps of different religious principles, he considered "too ludicrous . . . to deserve consideration."<sup>42</sup> "Superior clergymen," whether called bishops, or presidents, or superintendents, or overseers, were needed immediately for maintaining

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16. Later, White wrote that he believed the objection of the laity to bishops "to have been owing to an existing jealousy, that American Episcopacy would have been made an instrument of enforcing the new plan of civil government, which had been adopted in Great-Britain; in contrariety to original compact and future security for freedom: a regard to which was as prevalent among Episcopalians as among any description of their fellow-citizens." (White, *Memoirs*, p. 70.)

<sup>41</sup> White, *Case*, p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

the worship of God and the instruction and reformation of the people, . . . the principal objects of ecclesiastical discipline. . . . to relinquish them from a scrupulous adherence to Episcopacy, is sacrificing the substance to the ceremony.<sup>43</sup>

To delay, in the hope of obtaining the succession later on, seemed wrong to White. He asked:

But are the acknowledged ordinances of Christ's holy religion to be suspended for years, perhaps as long as the present generation shall continue, out of delicacy to a disputed point, and that relating only to externals? <sup>44</sup>

The need for speedy measures to provide for the public ministry was too great to brook delay. If later on, the Episcopal succession were obtained

any supposed imperfections of the immediate ordinations might, if it were judged proper, be supplied without acknowledging their nullity, by a *conditional* ordination resembling that of *conditional baptism* in the liturgy; the above was an expedient proposed by Archbishop Tillotson, Bishops Patrick, Stillingfleet, and others, at the revolution, and had actually been practised in Ireland by Archbishop Bramhall.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Bp. John Tillotson, Letter to Bp. Overall, quoted in A. J. Mason, *The Church of England and Episcopacy* (Cambridge, 1914), p. 79: "Reordination we must not admit, no more than rebaptization: but in case you find it doubtful, whether you be a priest capable to receive a benefice among us or no, I will do the same office for you, if you desire it, that I should do for one who doubts of his baptism . . ." This statement was made in connection with the validity of the orders of a Dr. De Laune, who had been ordained in Leyden. Simon Patrick (1626-1707), Bishop of Ely. According to Mason, Bp. Patrick insisted on episcopal ordination, making no exceptions. Mason quotes from the bishop's writings as follows: "Nor did our church, he says, ever acknowledge such power residing in . . . any mere presbyters . . . to ordain priests." (Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 249.) Edward Stillingfleet (1635-1699), Bishop of Worcester. (Mason, *op. cit.*, pp. 300-311.) The quotation is from White, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20.

In Chapter V, White undertook to prove that a temporary departure from episcopacy would be in keeping with the doctrines, practice, and basic principles of the Church of England. As the basis for the church's doctrine, he used first the Thirty-nine Articles, "which were evidently intended for a comprehensive system of doctrine."<sup>46</sup> He then turned to the canons, and the book of consecration and ordination. Every reference that he found to episcopacy was moderate and general; nowhere was it declared to be as binding as the sacraments. In regard to examples from church practice, he found only one comparable instance. At the time of Elizabeth, ministers returning to England, who had been ordained on the continent, were not required to be ordained by the English Episcopate, but only to subscribe to the articles of faith.<sup>47</sup>

In his discussion of the principles on which the authority of episcopacy was based, White presented four arguments in defense of his position, supported by references to well-known church writers.<sup>48</sup> First, following Bishop Hoadly, he pointed out that the fact that the apostles were succeeded by bishops in the early Church proved only that such was the ancient and apostolic practice, and not that three distinct

<sup>46</sup> White, *Case*, p. 20.

<sup>47</sup> For a recent study with a point of view similar to White's, cf. C. C. Richardson, *The Sacrament of Reunion* (New York; 1940). He states that on their return to England, men usually had to be ordained to hold benefices (p. 19, footnote). Apparently a distinction was made between those who had received presbyterian orders during the persecutions in the reign of Mary, and those who went abroad just to avoid ecclesiastical laws. (*Ibid.*) Three examples of the recognition of presbyterian orders in the Elizabethan era are given (p. 20, footnote). In a personal letter, dated January 10, 1951, Dr. Richardson writes that he has changed his position, and would now distinguish between the official teaching of the Church and prevailing opinions. He continues: "I should also reassess some of the historical material, coming out with a more Catholic answer. This would not, however, change the fact that in a number of instances those holding official positions in the church have from time to time acted contrary to the official doctrine. I refer, for instance, to the instances listed on page 20."

<sup>48</sup> White, *Case*, pp. 24-33.



orders of the ministry existed by divine appointment. Second, he argued that when reordination had been required of dissenting ministers in England, it had been to enforce the Act of Uniformity, the law of the land, and not to deny the validity of presbyterian ordination. His authorities for this argument were Bishops Stillingfleet and Hoadly, and Dr. Henry Maurice. His third point was that even the strongest adherents to the doctrine of apostolic succession, those who referred to episcopacy as the ordinance of Christ and the law of God, "ought to be understood only as asserting it to be binding, wherever it can conveniently be had: not that law and gospel are to cease rather than Episcopacy."<sup>49</sup> This argument, based on the "exigence of necessity," was carefully documented. Several references were made to Hooker, and one to Dr. Chandler. Three archbishops were cited: Whitgift, Usher, and Cranmer, and again, Bishop Hoadly. White's last argument was a brief refutation of the idea that the principle of the divine right of kings was based on scriptural passages. Bishop Sherlock was quoted as having shown that the Scriptures "stand clear of all disputes about the rights of princes and subjects; so that such disputes must be left to be decided by principles of natural equity and the constitution of the country."<sup>50</sup> White's own convictions were concisely stated:

Now if even those who hold Episcopacy to be of divine right, conceive the obligation to it to be not binding when that idea would be destructive of public worship, much more must *they* think so, who indeed venerate and prefer that form as the most ancient and eligible, but without any idea of divine right in the case. This the author believes to be the sentiment of the great body of Episcopalians in America; in which respect they have in their favor *unquestionably* the sense of the Church of England,

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33. Quotation from Bishop Sherlock, *Sermons*, Vol. IV., Discourse 13.

and as *he believes*, the opinions of her most distinguished prelates for piety, virtue and abilities.<sup>51</sup>

Having completed his doctrinal discussion, White returned for his conclusion to the practical considerations which were uppermost with him. His final appeal was to those who desired the continuance, in an independent United States, of their Episcopal churches, completely separated from the civil government of Britain. He addressed himself especially to those who were deeply attached to their own mode of worship

from its being most agreeable to reason and scripture, and its most nearly resembling the pattern of the purest ages of the church. On the consciences of such, above all others, may be pressed the obligation of adopting speedy and decisive measures, to prevent their being scattered "like sheep without a shepherd," and to continue the use of that form of divine service, which they believe to be "worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness." <sup>52</sup>

White's *Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered* presented the first plan for the union of the former Anglican churches on a federal basis, and it was widely read. Some churchmen, shocked by his proposal to create a titular episcopate without waiting for the succession, wrote to assure him that the necessity, on which his main argument was based, did not exist. Two such letters came to White from England, from clergymen formerly associated with him in Pennsylvania. The Rev. Alexander Murray wrote from London, July, 1783, that he considered it highly probable that consecration could be obtained from England, if applied for by the ambassador of the United States for one particular state or body of people. In any case, a bishop

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

was soon to be sent to Nova Scotia, and ordination could be sought there.<sup>53</sup> The next month the Rev. Jacob Duché wrote to assure White that the situation was not as desperate as depicted in his pamphlet. Duché suggested a plan which may have had the approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>54</sup> In it the clergy and lay deputies from each state were to elect one of the clergy to the office of bishop, to preside at their conventions, and with them to act on problems of discipline and of liturgical revisions.

Let him wait for an opportunity of being regularly consecrated; and till such opportunity offers, let the Convention meet and fix upon his Powers, the Mode of supporting him, and all other things that may contribute to y<sup>e</sup> Good Order and Government of the Church. He may do all the Offices of a Bishop but ORDAIN and confirm, and he will not be long without receiving Power to exercise these. All this will be perfectly consistent with your new Constitution.

In this plan the Episcopal Church of each state was to be independent of the others, though the bishops and some of the clergy might meet annually for the sake of uniformity of worship and discipline. There was to be no archbishop; instead, the bishop who had first been consecrated would preside. "A church might now be formed more upon y<sup>e</sup> Primitive and Apostolic Plan in America, than any at present in Christendom," Duché wrote.

The letters received by White opposing his plan were surprisingly moderate in tone, especially those written by Dr. Charles Inglis of New York. The bond between them was a sincere concern with "the common Interests of our Church, with which Politicks have nothing to do . . . the Desire of preserving our Church."<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, the basic disagree-

<sup>53</sup> In November, 1783, Dr. Charles Inglis sailed from New York, to be consecrated first Bishop of Nova Scotia.

<sup>54</sup> W. S. Perry, *History*, II, 12.

<sup>55</sup> C. Inglis, Letter to White, May 21, 1783.

ment between them was clearly presented by Inglis. Like Murray and Duché, he denied the necessity for radical action. He wrote:

I cannot but applaud your Zeal in a Matter of such general and great Moment; at the same Time I tell you candidly my Opinion, with which I believe you will agree, that the supposed Necessity, on which your Scheme is founded, does not now really exist; and that the Scheme itself could not answer the End of a regular Episcopate. In short, my good Brother, you proposed—not what you thought absolutely best and most eligible, but what the supposed Necessity of the Times compelled you to adopt and when no better Expedient appeared to be within your Reach.<sup>56</sup>

In the same conciliatory tone, Inglis insisted on the necessity of obtaining consecration within the succession. He wrote:

That the Scheme itself would not answer the end of an Episcopate, is no less clear; for if adopted and adhered to our Church would cease to be an Episcopal Church! It is impossible that there can be an Episcopal Church without Episcopal Ordination; and the Ordination here proposed is not Episcopal, that is, by a Bishop, but by Presbyters. But it is needless to enlarge on the point, as you very ingenuously own that “you are not wedded to the particular plan proposed”; and your good sense has prudently directed you “to delay rather than forward measures to accomplish the Object in Contemplation, with Hopes of its being undertaken with better information.”<sup>57</sup>

In answer to direct questions from White, Inglis wrote a long letter, October 22, 1783, fully expounding the principles on which he believed the Church should be reorganized. He explained the basis of his insistence on the necessity of

<sup>56</sup> C. Inglis, Letter to White, June 9, 1783.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

obtaining consecration within the apostolic succession, as follows:

As to "the Obligation of the Episcopal Succession," which, you say, "you never could find sufficient arguments to satisfy you of," I need only declare that I am perfectly clear and decided in my judgment of it. Before I entered into Holy Orders, I was fully persuaded of the truth of what is asserted in the Preface of our Ordinal—viz., "It is evident to all men diligently reading the Holy Scriptures and ancient authors, that, from the Apostles' Times, there have been three Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church—Bishops, Priests and Deacons." All my Reading and Inquiries since (and they have been diligent and impartial) have served to confirm me in this Persuasion. The Episcopal Order originated from our Saviour himself in the Persons of his Apostles; the Succession of that Order was continued by the inspired Apostles, who equally under the Influence of the Divine Spirit, dictated those Scriptures which are to be the Rule of Faith and Practice to the Christian Church to the End of Time; and also appointed those Ministers, and that Form of Government which were ever after to continue in the Christian Church; and I conceive that we are as much bound to observe their appointment and directions in the one case as the other.

His marked deference to the civil authorities showed how difficult it was for him to break with the state-church concept under which he had always lived. The right of selecting and inducting rectors, which varied from state to state in 1783 as it had in the Colonies, he believed should remain unchanged. Bishops should be elected by the clergy of each state, subject to the approval of the governor. Liturgical revisions should be made by the clergy, with the approval of the civil authorities. Some alterations were needed at once, because of the duty of the Church to the state. "The Collects for the King and Royal Family must be altered and adapted to the present State of Things; for, in Publick Worship

Prayers for the Civil Rulers of the State should never be omitted."

White's plan to have laity and clergy together constitute the governing body of the Church, Inglis found offensive. He wrote:

I must be candid in telling you that I can neither see the Propriety or the Advantage of the scheme you propose, to join Laymen with Clergymen for enacting Ecclesiastical Laws, trying delinquent Clergymen, etc., as a "Collective Body, to whom the extraordinary occasions of our Churches may be referred." This certainly, if I understand you right, is not the plan of the Church of England. Many Inconveniences will unquestionably attend it—the Advantages are doubtful. Instead of attracting Lay-Members to the Church, I apprehend it would be productive of endless Broils between the Laity and Clergy, probably of oppression to the latter. The Clergy are already amenable to the Civil Power for Civil Offences; is not that sufficient? Are not Clergymen the best Judges of Ecclesiastical Offences? And of the properest Methods to reclaim their Brethern? which is preferable to punishment, if it can be effected.

The main point for Inglis was the importance of establishing an American Episcopate. The liturgy and the canons both needed revision, but without a bishop no alterations could be made, "for, until you have a Bishop, you have no centre of Union, nor can you act with Regularity and Order in Matters of this Sort."<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, he was optimistic about the possibility of securing consecration in England. In his June letter, he proposed sending a candidate from America, some able and worthy clergyman "held in esteem by the leading Men in Power in this Country." In October he wrote:

<sup>58</sup> Inglis, Letter to White, June 9, 1783, p. 3. Written after Seabury had been chosen bishop-elect of Connecticut, but before he had sailed for England.

There is little doubt but that a Clergyman of good Character, who went to England properly recommended, with the consent of the State from whence he went, and where he was afterwards to reside, would be consecrated a Bishop. An act of Parliament, indeed, would be necessary to empower the Bishops in England to Consecrate without administering the State Oaths; but I am confident this Act might be obtained. I am almost a convert to your opinion that it would be best to request the Bishops in England to chuse a proper person there, a Man of Abilities, Piety, liberal Sentiments and unblemished Morals, for the first American Bishop. . . . But a Bishop is absolutely necessary, and either way he ought, by all means, to be obtained. The great Point is to procure the Consent and Approbation of the Legislature of some State to the measure; if this is done, the Rest will be easy.<sup>59</sup>

Inglis' reaction to White's plan was important as it was shared by many other clergymen, especially the ardent churchmen from Connecticut and New York who had been loyalists during the Revolution. It was hard for them to conceive of a church independent of the civil government. They were strongly opposed to lay representation in the governing body of the Church. Above all, they insisted on the importance of obtaining a duly consecrated bishop for the United States, as a necessary preliminary to reorganization.

On the other hand, White's plan was well received by the churchmen who had been patriots during the Revolution. They shared his strong conviction of the importance of representative government, the principle for which the Colonies had fought, and on which the United States was being built. The most enduring contribution of White's pamphlet was the framework he proposed for "a church government that would contain the constituent principles of the Church of England, and yet be independent of foreign jurisdiction or influence."<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Inglis, Letter to White, October 22, 1783, pp. 6-7.

<sup>60</sup> White, *Case*, preface.

Though White wrote from the point of view of one group within the Church in doctrinal matters, in the practical problems of organization he planned for the whole Church as one national body. With the publication of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*, a start was made in the development of those characteristics within the Anglican communion which originated in the Protestant Episcopal Church of America.

The leaders in the reorganization of the Episcopal churches in Maryland and Pennsylvania accepted the principles of the new American government, and proposed to adapt the government of the Church accordingly. In Connecticut, however, the clergy were primarily concerned with the preservation of the Church of England, with the minimum of change. Alterations in the liturgy, as necessitated by the new political situation, and such legal restrictions as the new civil government might impose, they were prepared to accept. White's proposal to use the episcopal form of church government without waiting for the succession, they found profoundly alarming. The Church of England in Connecticut had been built up under the ministry of men who had come into the Church because of their conviction that only episcopal orders were valid. For them, the Church could not be continued without a bishop duly consecrated in the apostolic succession. Only such a bishop could maintain the doctrine and discipline of the Church, and ordain new clergy to administer the Word and the Sacraments. No one else had the authority to supervise the necessary revisions in the canons and liturgy. Whatever risks might be involved, whatever obstacles had to be overcome, the Connecticut clergy were convinced that they must secure a bishop consecrated within the apostolic succession.

The problems facing the Connecticut clergy were serious. Having been loyalists during the Revolution, they did not know, in 1783, what treatment they would receive from the



new state government. The possibility of obtaining consecration in England was uncertain, as special permission for the English bishops to omit the usual oath of loyalty to the king would be required. If consecration were secured, there was no assurance that a bishop would be permitted to return to the United States. Seeking to introduce one, consecrated in England, might be considered treason by the new American government or by the populace. However, the Connecticut clergy were prepared to fight, as the very existence of the Church, for which they had already made many sacrifices, was at stake. A duly consecrated bishop had to be secured.

Clergy conventions were not uncommon in Connecticut, especially in times of crisis.<sup>61</sup> On March 25, 1783, a meeting was held at Woodbury, Connecticut, at the home of the Rev. John R. Marshall, attended by ten of the fourteen clergy then resident in the state.<sup>62</sup> So far, no record of the meeting has been found; perhaps none was made. We are told that the clergy kept the business transacted "a profound secret, even from their most intimate Friends of the laity."<sup>63</sup> The refugee clergy in New York were consulted, but they, too, were cautious. Our knowledge of what transpired is based largely on documents drawn up at the time and made public later.

Part of the business of the Woodbury convention was to compose a letter to the Rev. William White, protesting the new form of church government proposed in his *Case of the Episcopal Churches Considered*.<sup>64</sup> While agreeing that the new political situation necessitated some changes in the regulation of the American Episcopal churches, the Connecticut clergy insisted that none could be made until resident

<sup>61</sup> Cf. E. L. Pennington, "Colonial Clergy Conventions," in *Hist. Mag.* VIII (September, 1939), 209-216.

<sup>62</sup> The Rev. Daniel Fogg, Letter to the Rev. Samuel Parker, July 2, 1783.

<sup>63</sup> D. Fogg, Letter to Parker, July 14, 1783.

<sup>64</sup> A. Jarvis, Letter of the Connecticut Clergy to White, March 25, 1783. White was not told of the selection at the same meeting of a bishop-elect to seek consecration in England.

bishops had been secured. White's suggestion that episcopacy be approved in principle and adopted in form, without waiting for the succession, shocked them. They accused him of treating bishops as purely political creatures, who derived their authority from the king. They wrote, according to White's *Memoirs*:

But could you have proposed to set up the ministry, without waiting for the succession, had you believed the Episcopal superiority to be an ordinance of Christ, with the exclusive authority of ordination and government, and that it has ever been so esteemed in the purest ages of the Church? and yet we conceive this to be the sense of Episcopalians in general, and warranted by the constant practice of the Christian Church. Really, sir, we think an Episcopal Church without Episcopacy, if it be not a contradiction in terms, would, however, be a new thing under the sun.

The authorities, quoted by White as admitting the validity of presbyterian ordination, received scant attention from the Connecticut clergy. They referred to "concessions from the venerable Hooker, and Dr. Chandler, which their exuberant charity to the reformed churches abroad, led them to make." There followed a brief interpretation of the position of their colleague, Dr. Chandler. Reference was made to his unqualified statement that the succession once broken could never be restored except by Christ himself.<sup>65</sup> They continued:

As far as we can find, it has been the constant opinion of our Church in England and here, that the Episcopal superiority is an ordinance of Christ, and we think that the uniform practice of the whole American Church, for near a century, sending their candidates three thousand miles for holy orders, is more than

<sup>65</sup> T. B. Chandler, *An Appeal to the Public in Behalf of the Church of England* (New York, 1707), p. 4: "If the succession be once broken, not all the men on earth, not all the angels in heaven, without an immediate commission from Christ, can restore it."

presumptive proof that the Church here are, and ever have been, of this opinion.

White's references to instances of toleration of presbyterian orders within the Church were brushed aside, as having been answered again and again. To the Connecticut clergy, the divine basis for the sole authority of the bishops to ordain and govern was so clearly a permanent teaching of the Church that they wondered "whether such Episcopalians as consent even to a temporary departure, and set aside this ordinance of Christ for conveniency, can scarcely deserve the name of Christians."

White's claim that the situation in America made it necessary to proceed without the succession had no weight with the Connecticut group. They argued that, until an effort to obtain consecration had been made and rejected, no necessity could be said to exist. Actually, they believed the time more auspicious than ever before for introducing bishops to America, for

however dangerous bishops formerly might have been thought to the civil rights of these states, this danger has now vanished, for such superiors will have no civil authority. They will be purely ecclesiastics.

They felt sure that consecration within the succession could be procured somewhere, in England or in Europe. If White's plan were accepted by the states to the south of Connecticut, a united American Church would become impossible, for the New England churchmen would never agree to it.<sup>66</sup> They concluded:

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 286: "Nothing is further from the design of this letter than to begin a dispute with you; but in a frank and brotherly way to express our opinion of the mistaken and dangerous tendency of the pamphlet. We fear, should the scheme of it be carried into execution in the southern states, it will create divisions in the Church at a time when its whole strength depends upon its unity; for we know it is totally abhorrent from the principles of the Church in the northern states, and are fully convinced they will never submit to it."

And indeed should we consent to a temporary departure from Episcopacy, there would be very little propriety in asking for it afterwards, and as little reason ever to expect it in America. Let us all then unite as one man to improve this favorable opportunity, to procure an object so desirable and so essential to the Church.

Though no mention of the fact was made in their letter to White, the clergy at Woodbury took the first step towards securing a bishop for Connecticut. Two candidates for the office were elected as having suitable qualifications: Jeremiah Leaming and Samuel Seabury.<sup>67</sup> Both were Connecticut men, at that time residing in New York. The Rev. Abraham Jarvis was sent in person to prevail on one or the other to undertake the difficult trip to England. While there, he was also to consult such of the New York clergy "as they thought prudent on the subject." Dr. Leaming declined the election, and the Rev. Samuel Seabury became the bishop-elect of Connecticut.<sup>68</sup>

The convention was aware of the difficulty of finding a candidate who would be acceptable to them and to the state of Connecticut. Seabury, whom they wanted, had been loyal to England during the war. If he could obtain consecration in England, would he be allowed to return to the United States? In his letter of August 1, 1783, the Rev. Daniel Fogg explained to the Rev. Samuel Parker of Boston, the dilemma faced by the convention:

<sup>67</sup> No mention is made in the official documents pertaining to the bishop-elect of Connecticut of the election of Leaming, nor to the task assigned to Jarvis. The source for both facts is Seabury, Letter to the Rev. William Morice, secretary of the S. P. G., February 27, 1785.

<sup>68</sup> Jeremiah Leaming, Letter to Dr. Samuel Peters in London, June 1, 1786, in *Hist. Mag.* I (March, 1932), 120, 121: "You ask me why I was not Bp. of Con't? I was Bp. Elect by vote of the clergy here; but fear that the Chh. might suffer under my poor Abilities caused me to answer *Nolo episcopari.*"

Dr. Seabury's being a refugee was an objection which I made, but was answered, they could not fix upon any other person who they thought so likely to succeed as he was, and should he succeed and not be permitted to reside in any of the United States, it would be an easy matter for any other gentleman who was not obnoxious to the *powers that be*, to be consecrated by him at Halifax.

The Connecticut clergy were determined to maintain the English Church system. They were opposed to White's suggestion that in America the basic unit of organization be changed to the individual parish. They intended to make the diocese, dominated by a bishop, the basic unit as in England. As all the colonial churches had been under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of London, how were the limits of the jurisdiction of their bishop to be established? The Woodbury convention decided to ask for a bishop for their state only, leaving it up to the clergy in other states "to act as you please, either to be subject to him or not."

The problem of supporting their bishop was particularly difficult. In England, where the bishops were peers of the realm, the dignity of the office required a big income. In Connecticut, at the time of the election of Seabury, there was no money on hand for a bishop, and none in view. If Seabury secured consecration, the best plan seemed to be for him to return, as a missionary for the S.P.G., to Connecticut or, if necessary, to Nova Scotia.<sup>69</sup> While in England, Seabury was to try to collect the legacies which had been left, from time to time, for the support of an American bishop.<sup>70</sup> Thus, it was hoped that Seabury could be supported as bishop without too great a drain on the struggling parishes, and, of course, without public aid. Under these conditions,

<sup>69</sup> D. Fogg, Letter to Parker, July 14, 1783.

<sup>70</sup> New York Clergy, Letter to the Archbishop of York, May 24, 1783.

it was hoped that he would be permitted by the governor to exercise the spiritual powers of the Episcopal office in Connecticut.<sup>71</sup>

Though planned and authorized at the Woodbury convention, the official documents, requesting the consecration of the Rev. Samuel Seabury, were written in New York with the added support of some prominent New York clergymen. On April 21, 1783, two documents were sent to the Archbishop of York.<sup>72</sup> One was a letter from the Connecticut clergy, which began by stressing the fact that, in spite of the broken connection between their two countries, they desired to maintain the polity of the Church of England. For this purpose they needed a bishop. They believed the time propitious for introducing one into America, as the former fear that political power would be connected with the office was no longer possible. The immediate securing of a duly consecrated bishop had become imperative, because of a dangerous plan, lately published in Philadelphia, "to constitute a nominal Episcopate by the united suffrages of presbyters and laymen."<sup>73</sup> To meet this crisis, they entreated the archbishop to agree to the consecration of the Rev. Samuel Seabury, a man in every way qualified for the Episcopal office. The letter was accompanied by a testimonial signed by three prominent New York clergymen: Jeremiah Leaming, Charles Inglis, Benjamin Moore, and others.<sup>74</sup> They wrote to assure the archbishop of Seabury's qualifications and of their support of the application for his consecration. In conclusion, they said:

<sup>71</sup> Connecticut Clergy, Letter to the S.P.G., March, 1783.

<sup>72</sup> The request for the consecration of Seabury was made first to the Archbishop of York, because the Archbishop of Canterbury had died, and no word of the appointment of a new Primate had been received in America. (White, *Memoirs*, p. 79.)

<sup>73</sup> Beardsley, *Seabury*, pp. 80-82.

<sup>74</sup> The other signatures were the Rev<sup>d</sup> Isaac Browne, Rev<sup>d</sup> Abraham Jarvis, Rev. Jonathan Odell, Rev. John Beardsley, and in ("London July 10") the Rev. Samuel Cooke. (Seabury, *Memoir*, p. 186. Copied from Bp. Seabury's papers.)

And we cannot forbear to express our most earnest wish that Doctor Seabury may succeed in this application, as it will be the means of preserving the Church of England in America from ruin, and of preventing many irregularities which we see approaching, and which, if once introduced, no after care may be able to remove.<sup>75</sup>

On May 24, 1783, the three New York clergymen who had signed the testimonial, wrote a letter to the Archbishop of York, reaffirming their hearty concurrence in the action of the Connecticut clergy, and their conviction "that no other means can be devised to preserve the Episcopal Church in this country." They referred to the plan for Seabury to return to his duties as missionary at New London, and then to apply to the governor for permission to exercise the spiritual powers of the Episcopal office. No objections to such a purely ecclesiastical bishop were anticipated in America, and they trusted that any impediments to the consecration in England would be removed by the king. The legacies, which had been left for the support of an American bishop, they hoped would be given to Seabury, if consecrated. At the close of their letter they asked that the Rev. Thomas B. Chandler be appointed Bishop of Nova Scotia. Should both men succeed, "the Episcopal Church will yet flourish in this western hemisphere."

Three communications addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury about this same time are in existence, all incomplete. A letter, signed by Abraham Jarvis as secretary, is reprinted in Beardsley's *Life of Seabury*, without any date, but it was probably written May 24, 1783.<sup>76</sup> It was similar to the letter sent the Archbishop of York in April, with greater emphasis on their fear of White's plan, and on their hope

<sup>75</sup> Clergy Testimonial to the Archbishop of York, April 21, 1783, in Beardsley, *Seabury*, pp. 82-83.

<sup>76</sup> A. Jarvis, Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury. May 24, 1783, is the implied date (*Ibid.*, p. 96). Further substantiated in Seabury, *Memoir*, p. 186.

of the primate's support in securing Seabury's consecration. Beardsley also reprinted a letter from the New York clergy, dated May 24, 1783, but unsigned, which was published in *The Churchman's Magazine*, February, 1807. This letter was longer and more emotional than the others. The same points were made, often in more detail, and some new material was added. A full paragraph was given to the fact that the political impediments to introducing a bishop to America no longer existed, and another to the necessity of overcoming any obstacles that might exist in England. There followed a description of the desperate state of the Church in America, especially the great need for clergy:

In the four colonies of Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, we know at this time of no less than *seventy* vacant churches, to say nothing of many large tracts of country, where several congregations might immediately be formed and churches built were there clergymen to officiate. We believe the case of the other colonies, in this respect, to be nearly similar . . . yet we are of the opinion that all those vacancies would soon be filled were bishops here to confer Holy Orders.

They pointed out that the change in civil government necessitated alterations in the liturgy and a revision of the canons. Both required "the superintending authority of a bishop" to "secure unanimity and submission, prevent dangerous innovations and all unnecessary departure from the established articles, rules, and forms of our excellent Church." As the letter drew to a conclusion, the New York men forcefully expressed the critical importance of Seabury's application:

A miscarriage on this occasion would preclude all hope of succeeding hereafter in England, where duty and inclination lead us to apply for an episcopate, and many bad consequences would unavoidably follow. It would forward the pernicious



scheme alluded to by the clergy of Connecticut in their letter to your Grace; it might probably give rise to applications for an episcopate to foreign states, which must be attended with many inconveniences; or possibly the issue might be the total extinction of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

A second testimonial to Seabury's qualifications was written in New York, June 3, 1783, signed by the Rev. Charles Inglis and Benjamin Moore of New York, and the Rev. Jonathan Odell of Burlington, New Jersey. Presumably it was addressed to the Archbishop of Canterbury, though no name is given on the copy found.<sup>77</sup> Though more concisely expressed, the content was practically the same as in the testimonial sent by the New York clergy to the Archbishop of York, April 21, 1783. Dr. Seabury's abilities, learning, and moral character were emphasized, and also the urgency of his consecration, "as many inconveniences may be thereby prevented, which no after care can remove, when they have once taken place."

Fortified by the written support of his American clergy friends, Seabury sailed from New York for England, June 7, 1783. He arrived in London on July 7, and sent a report to those who had elected him on July 15, 1783.<sup>78</sup> In that week, he had made two important calls. The first was to the Bishop of London, who heartily approved of his application for consecration, but was unwilling to take any action in support of it. The second was to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was willing to do all he could, but was frankly doubtful of any success. He explained that permission to omit the oath of loyalty to the king in the consecration service would require an act of Parliament, and not merely a dispensation

<sup>77</sup> Second Clergy Testimonial for Seabury, New York, June 3, 1783, in Seabury, *Memoir*, pp. 186-187. This may have been presented to the Bishop of London, on whom Seabury called first.

<sup>78</sup> Seabury, Letter to the Connecticut Clergy, July 15, 1783.

from the king. Seabury had been unable to consult the Archbishop of York, as he was not in London.

On August 10, 1783, Seabury again wrote to his Connecticut friends. He had made a discouraging journey to York. The archbishop there agreed with the Archbishop of Canterbury, with whom he was in correspondence about Seabury's application. Though convinced of the necessity of supplying bishops to the United States, both were

exceedingly embarrassed by the following difficulties:

1. That it would be sending a bishop to Connecticut, which they have no right to do without the consent of the State.
2. That the bishop would not be received in Connecticut.
3. That there would be no adequate support for him.
4. That the oaths in the ordination office cannot be got over, because the king's dispensation would not be sufficient . . . and the council would not give their concurrence without the permission of the State of Connecticut to the bishop's residing among them.

Seabury urged the clergy to muster the help of the laity and to try to secure permission for a resident bishop in Connecticut.

By September, Seabury was even more discouraged. He wrote on September 3, 1783 to the Rev. Jeremiah Leaming:

With regard to my success, I do not only think it doubtful, but that the probability is against it. . . . Unless it can be made a ministerial affair, none of the bishops will proceed in it for fear of clamor. . . . They are apprehensive that my consecration would be looked on in the light of *sending* a bishop to Connecticut, and that the State of Connecticut would resist it, and that they should be censured as meddlers in matters that do not concern them. This is the great reason why I wish that the State of Connecticut should be applied to for their consent. Without it, I think nothing will be done.

Unfortunately the English bishops were making an issue of the means of support for a bishop in America, being "apprehensive that the character will sink into contempt, unless there is some competent and permanent fund for its support." Obviously Seabury expected nothing on this score, for he merely asked for an opinion as to what he should say on the subject.

Another blow to American hopes reported by Seabury was the fact that, even if a bishop were consecrated for Nova Scotia, as seemed probable, he could not help the Church in the United States, for "his hands will be as much tied as the bishops in England." Seabury emphasized that his only chance of securing consecration depended on obtaining official permission from the state of Connecticut for a resident bishop.<sup>79</sup> The letter ended with the postscript: "Let application be made also to the State of Vermont, lest that to Connecticut should fail." In the course of the letter Seabury explained that he needed to know as quickly as possible the chances of his serving as bishop, as his funds were giving out, and he should be looking for a new position. If some other clergyman were more acceptable to Connecticut, Seabury would willingly assist him. Only one thing mattered: "The point is, to get the Episcopal authority into that country."

On September 3, 1783, the day on which Seabury wrote to Leaming, the final peace treaty of the Revolution was signed in Paris. With the official recognition of the United States as a sovereign power, some concessions on the part of the British government might be made to meet the needs of the Church of England in America. During the last months

<sup>79</sup> After the receipt of this letter, but without reference to it, Inglis urged White to ask some legislature to the south of Connecticut for official consent to the coming of a bishop as "nothing of the kind is to be expected from the Northern States." (Inglis, Letter to White, October, 1783.) [N. Y. Hist. Soc.]

of 1783, no important action was taken towards the reorganization of the Church. It was a period of waiting.

The three different approaches that had already been made towards reorganizing were briefly summarized in a letter from the Rev. Bela Hubbard of New Haven, Connecticut, to the Rev. Samuel Peters, a former colleague who had fled to England, written March 19, 1784:

Our Clergy of Maryland nominated Dr. Smith for their Bishop, but the assembly, who imagined they should have a voice in that affair would not approve of the candidate—This refusal drew from the Clergy, a *Bill of rights*—This disagreement at present retards the settling of the Church in that quarter. Mr. White a quondam chaplin to congress in Philadelphia goes on another plan & endeavours to get a Bp. nominated by the several Vestry's in that State—our *plan* you know but I cannot omit the mention of the favorable attention of our General Assembly to it, they declare they have no objection, but if we can support him, they will give us no trouble.

As inaccurate in regard to Maryland as it was in spelling, the letter nonetheless pointed out clearly the three main emphases. In Maryland the main problem was to establish the legal status of the Protestant Episcopal Church, as heir to the Church of England, under the authority of their State Legislature. White's plan was to begin with individual vestries, building up from them a democratic organization of elected representatives and officers.<sup>80</sup> The Connecticut plan, to begin by securing a duly consecrated bishop to head the

<sup>80</sup> The following comment by White on Seabury's recommendation for consecration brings out clearly the contrast between the Connecticut and Philadelphia plans of reorganization: "This was an act of the clergy generally in that state [Connecticut], and of a few in New York; and is rather to be considered as done by them in their individual capacities, than as a regular ecclesiastical proceeding; because, as yet, there had not been any organized assembly, who could claim the power of acting for the Church in consequence of either the express or the implied consent of the body of Episcopalians." (White, *Memoirs*, p. 33.)

Church in their state, was already known to Peters. Hubbard reported only on the freedom from interference by the civil government, which had been promised to the purely ecclesiastical bishop they sought.

As we look back to 1783 with the perspective of history, the three plans seem natural in relation to the circumstances in which the Church of England had developed in each of the colonies concerned. Even more clearly we can see that, though they differed radically from one another, all three plans had one point in common. The main concern, in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut, was to insure the continued existence of the faith, order, and worship of the Anglican Communion in the United States of America.

### CHAPTER III

## *Conflicting Plans for Reorganization Launched (1784)*

The groping beginnings of reorganization of the Church of England in America in 1783 were so independent of one another that, in spite of basic disagreement, there was little bitterness. The uncertainty of the success of any plan to assure the continued existence of the Episcopal Church moderated the latent antagonism in the conflicting points of view. During 1784, however, the atmosphere changed, as two mutually exclusive ways of reorganizing the Church gained strength. Under the leadership of the ex-Philadelphian, Dr. Smith, the Maryland group joined with the group from Pennsylvania to promote the federal plan of union, advocated by the Rev. William White in his pamphlet *The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered*. According to this plan, the authority to govern the Episcopal Church in America had to be derived from elected representatives from all the churches throughout the United States, united by the voluntary acceptance of a federal constitution. The Connecticut clergy, on the other hand, insisted that only a bishop ever had, or could have, authority to govern in an Episcopal church. No reorganization could be considered until a bishop had been procured to head the Church, according to the supporters of the ecclesiastical

plan.<sup>1</sup> The progress of the two plans during 1784 will be traced separately, beginning with the federal plan.

#### A. THE FEDERAL PLAN FOR REORGANIZATION

The goal of the federal plan was the creation of a General Assembly to which would be delegated the authority to govern the Episcopal Church in America. As the members of the assembly were to be elected representatives of all the churches, the first step in reorganization lay with each individual parish. Every Anglican parish in the United States was to elect lay delegates to meet with the clergy and delegates from neighboring parishes. These groups would gradually broaden into state conventions, at which representatives would be elected for interstate meetings, and, finally, for the national General Assembly. In the Middle States, where this plan was followed, preliminary meetings filled most of the time from the fall of 1783 to the summer of 1784.

Not long after the publication of *The Case of the Episcopal Churches in the United States Considered*, the Rev. William White started carrying out his own suggestions. He began by consulting the other Philadelphia clergy about a joint meeting of representatives of their three churches, as a first step towards a federal union. White was rector of two of the churches—Christ Church and St. Peter's—and had no difficulty in securing the support of his assistant, the Rev. Robert Blackwell, and of the Rev. Samuel Magaw, rector of St. Paul's. He was also supported by his vestries. At a meeting held November 13, 1783, the vestrymen of both churches agreed to appoint lay representatives who, with similar representatives from St. Paul's were "to confer with ye Clergy of ye said Churches, on ye Subject of forming a

<sup>1</sup>The use of "federal" and "ecclesiastical" to differentiate the two plans is taken from S. D. McConnell, *History of the American Episcopal Church* (New York, 1904), p. 240. Hereinafter referred to as McConnell, *History*.

Representative Body of ye Episcopal Churches in this State.”<sup>2</sup> The meeting of the clergy and lay representatives of the three Philadelphia churches was set for March 29, 1784.

Before the Philadelphia meeting took place, White was drawn into other action towards the church union he desired. On January 26, 1784, the Rev. Abraham Beach of New Brunswick, New Jersey, wrote to White suggesting a clergy conference. He wrote:

I always expected that as soon as the Return of Peace should put it in their Power, that the Members of the Episcopal Church in this Country would interest themselves in its Behalf—would endeavour to introduce Order and Uniformity into it, and provide for a Succession in the Ministry. The Silence on this Subject which hath so universally prevailed, and still prevails, is a Matter of real Concern to me, as it seems to portend an utter extinction of that Church which I so highly venerate.

Beach suggested that a convenient opportunity for a clergy meeting could be made in connection with “the Widows Fund, which may at present be an object worth attending to, but will unavoidably dwindle to nothing, if much longer neglected.” He proposed New Brunswick as the place, and early spring as the time, for a meeting of the Corporation for the Relief of the Widows and Children of Clergymen in Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey. He expressed the hope that as many as possible of the clergy, who were not members of the corporation, would come together at the same time and place.

White was still corresponding with Beach about the preparatory steps to the Brunswick meeting, at the time of the meeting of the Philadelphia committees. Each of the three

<sup>2</sup> Records of the Preliminary Conventions in Philadelphia, in White's handwriting. *Autographs and Manuscripts of the Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church*. 12 volumes. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City. Hereinafter referred to as Morgan Manuscripts.



churches had appointed two lay representatives to meet with the three clergymen. They met at Dr. White's house, March 29, 1784, one layman being absent because of illness. Their purpose was to plan for a convention of the clergy and lay representatives from all the Episcopal churches in Pennsylvania, the next step in the federal process of reorganization. The fact that a State Assembly was being held in Philadelphia the day of their meeting, to which many out-of-town people had come, afforded an opportunity for making the necessary broader contacts. We find from the minutes of the meeting at Dr. White's that his committee<sup>3</sup>

having taken into consideration ye Necessity of speedily adopting Measures for ye forming of a Plan of ecclesiastical Government for ye Episcopal Church, are of Opinion, that a Subject of such Importance ought to be taken up, if possible, with ye concurrence of ye Episcopalians generally in ye States. They, therefore, resolved to ask a Conference with such Members of ye Episcopal Congregations in ye Counties of this State as are now in Town; and they authorize ye clergymen now present to converse with such Persons as they can find of ye above Description.

The Episcopalians thus contacted were asked to meet with the existing committee at Christ Church two nights later. Though several persons reached in this way agreed to attend the meeting on March 31, only one came. Some, who had expressed interest, were detained by an unexpected sitting of the assembly. The Philadelphia group, therefore, still had the responsibility of arranging a Pennsylvania conference. They proceeded to draw up a letter to be sent to the church wardens and vestries of every Episcopal congregation in the state, asking them

to delegate one or more of their Body to assist at a Meeting to be held in this City on Monday, ye 24th day of May next; and

<sup>3</sup> White, Record of the Meeting of March 29, 1784. [Morgan Manuscripts.]

such Clergymen as have parochial Cure in ye said Congregations to attend ye Meeting; which they hope will contain a full Representation of the Episcopal Church in this State.

The state meeting, it was explained, was to be "preparatory to a general Consultation," because a subject of such importance as a proposed plan for ecclesiastical government "ought to be taken up, if possible, with ye concurrence of ye Episcopalians generally in ye States." <sup>4</sup>

In the meantime, Beach continued to arrange for the meeting at New Brunswick, but he had difficulty in settling on a time and place with the New York clergy. The rector of Trinity Church in New York City would head the delegation, but in the spring of 1784, the rectorship was a matter of litigation. The Rev. Benjamin Moore and the Rev. Samuel Provoost had each been appointed rector, one by a loyalist, the other by a patriot vestry. When Dr. Inglis left New York for England at the time of the withdrawal of the British troops in November, 1783, the loyalist vestry of Trinity promptly chose his assistant, the Rev. Benjamin Moore, as rector. However, on their return to the city, the patriots would not recognize either Moore or the vestry who had elected him.<sup>5</sup> They selected the Rev. Samuel Provoost, a former assistant at Trinity, who as early as 1769 had resigned

<sup>4</sup> Record of the Meeting of March 31, 1784. [Morgan Manuscripts.]

<sup>5</sup> The New York Historical Society has a manuscript letter from Robert R. Livingston to Peter S. DuPonceau of Philadelphia, dated December 15, 1783, describing the situation from the point of view of a Presbyterian leader: "A very great & important dispute has arisen in the church of England, which is in this City a great political machine, disposing property to the amount of £200,000 sterling—The torics a few days before we came in elected as rector a man who has preached and prayed against us during the war—The Whigs insist on a new appointment & the dispute is carried on with so much warmth that it may probably draw after it serious political consequence by showing that they have resumed their former insolence, & that nothing lenient will do for them. For my own part I begin to believe (contrary to my former sentiments) that it is next to impossible that a man who has been an advocate for arbitrary power for ten years can be a good subject in a free republic."

because of his pro-revolutionary sentiments. During the war he had lived in retirement at his country place, occasionally assisting the American army. The returned patriots enlisted the support of the New York legislature, which on April 17, 1784, passed an act to force Trinity Church to conform to the new state constitution. New wardens and a new vestry were appointed who made Provoost rector, retaining Moore as assistant.<sup>6</sup>

Beach was able to complete arrangements for the interstate meeting in connection with the Widows Relief Fund before the appointments at Trinity Church were settled. On April 13, 1784, he wrote White that Provoost had agreed to Brunswick as the place and May 11 as the date. For the first time, Beach made the following plan:

I wish you would be so good as to advertise it in one of your News Papers, with an invitation to all Clergymen of the Episcopal Church, and perhaps you may think it proper to invite respectable characters of the LAITY, as matters of general concern to the Church may probably be discussed. As soon as I find the Advertisement in a Philadelphia paper, I will cause it to be inserted in one in New York, and will WRITE likewise to all concerned in Jersey.

On May 11, 1784, at New Brunswick, New Jersey, the first interstate meeting in behalf of the Episcopal churches since the war was held as planned, which White later recorded as "the first step towards the forming of a collective body of the Episcopal Church in the United States."<sup>7</sup> It was

<sup>6</sup> W. Stowe, "Additional Letters of Reverend Abraham Beach," *Hist. Mag.* V (June, 1936), 135. In his letter of August 4, 1784, to the S. P. G., Beach tells of the Trinity Church quarrel, ending with the election of B. Moore as assistant pastor.

<sup>7</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 21. The minutes of the Brunswick meeting in the handwriting of B. Moore, dated May 11, 1784, are in the New York Historical Society. A brief account of the meeting, written by White, is given in the preface to J. Bioren (ed.), *Journals of the General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church* (Philadelphia, 1817). Hereinafter referred to as Bioren, *Journals*.

held "ostensibly to take measures for the revival of the Corporation for the relief of the Widows and Children of the Clergy, but primarily for the discussion of the principles of ecclesiastical union."<sup>8</sup> The charters held by the corporation from New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania had been issued by the colonial governments, and a meeting to consult on ways to renew them was needed. However, the corporation meeting at Brunswick was soon adjourned to a later date in New York, and was replaced by the larger group of clergy and laity who conferred on principles of union for the Episcopal churches in the States. The trend of discussion was established at the start, when

the clergy from Philadelphia read to the assembly the principles just before adopted, under appointments of their vestries . . . and strongly recommended their taking of similar measures.<sup>9</sup>

Interest centered on the setting up of an official meeting for the discussion of ecclesiastical union, to be held in New York in October, 1784, to which clergy and lay representatives of the Episcopal churches in all the states were to be invited. For this purpose, "Committees of Correspondence were chosen to interest the Clergymen of the scattered Churches in the proposed meeting at New York."<sup>10</sup>

It was at the Brunswick meeting that the Philadelphia clergy learned for the first time that Seabury was seeking consecration in England. Their informant was the Rev. Benjamin Moore of New York, one of those who had signed the testimonials for Seabury. Moore explained that

In consequence of the measure taken as above stated, the gentlemen concerned in it thought, that during the pending of

<sup>8</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 78. Not mentioned in the ms. record of Moore.

<sup>10</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

their application, they could not consistently join in any proceedings which might be construed to interfere with it.<sup>11</sup>

To meet this latent threat to the federal plan, a special delegation was appointed to visit the Connecticut clergy at their coming convention, "for the Purpose of soliciting their Concurrence with us in such Measures as may be deemed conducive to the Union and Prosperity of the Episcopal Churches in the States of America."<sup>12</sup> Though no disagreement was recorded in the minutes, there was evidently an undercurrent of tension, for White wrote of it in reminiscence:

The author remarked at this meeting, that, notwithstanding the good humour which prevailed at it, the more northern clergymen were under apprehensions of there being a disposition on the part of the more southern to make material deviation from the ecclesiastical system of England, in the article of church government. At the same time he wondered, that any sensible and well-informed persons should overlook the propriety of accomodating that system, in some respects, to the prevailing sentiments and habits of the people of this country, now become an independent and combined commonwealth.<sup>13</sup>

The meeting at New Brunswick was followed by state meetings in Pennsylvania and Maryland, which had been previously arranged. The appointed committees representing the Episcopal churches in Pennsylvania met in Philadelphia, May 24, 1784, and the Maryland group at Annapolis, June 22, 1784. Both groups were committed to the idea that nothing could be done in the way of rebuilding the life of the Episcopal churches in the States until an authoritative gov-

<sup>11</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>12</sup> Moore, Minutes of the Brunswick Meeting. (N. Y. Hist. Soc.) The committee consisted of the Rev. Messrs. Beach, Bloomer, and B. Moore.

<sup>13</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

erning body had been elected, and voluntarily accepted, as the bond of union. White commented that

it seemed to those at least who took up the subject in the middle states, that nothing could be done to effect, without some association, under which the churches might act as a body: they having been theretofore detached from, and independent of one another; . . . and therefore it was evident, that without the creating of some new tie, the churches in different states, and even those in the same state, might adopt such varying measures as would forever prevent their being combined in one communion.<sup>14</sup>

The principles, drawn up by the Philadelphia clergy and presented by them to the Brunswick meeting, dominated the Pennsylvania gathering of May 24, 1784. According to the minutes of the meeting, sixteen parishes were represented, two delegates arriving late, a total of twenty-five persons being present.<sup>15</sup> Of these, twenty-one were lay, there being only one clergyman present besides the three from Philadelphia. White claimed this as the first ecclesiastical assembly to include lay members.<sup>16</sup> One of the first acts of the group was to decide that each church should have only one vote on any resolution, regardless of the number of representatives present. As basic units of organization, the individual parishes must be equal. Next, a Standing Committee of the Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania was set up, consisting of clergy and laity. With similar committees from other states, they were to draw up a constitution for the

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>15</sup> *Journal of the Meetings, which led to the institution of a Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Pennsylvania; together with the Journals of the first six Conventions of the said Church.* (Philadelphia: Hall and Sellers, 1790), p. 26. Hereinafter referred to as *Journal of early Pa. Meetings*. Also Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

<sup>16</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 86. The laity had always been present at vestry meetings and at the meetings for the Widows' Relief Fund. This, however, was a meeting to determine ecclesiastical polity.

government of the Church, which would be submitted to the individual parishes for their approval. The constitution was "to be binding on all congregations consenting to it, as soon as a majority of the congregations shall have consented." The main accomplishment of the Pennsylvania convention was the acceptance of six fundamental principles, which were offered as "instructions" to their standing committee. As these principles served as the basis for discussion in many of the later ecclesiastical meetings, they are given here in full:

*First.* That the Episcopal church in these states is and ought to be independent of all foreign Authority, ecclesiastical and civil.

*Second.* That it hath, and ought to have, in common with all other religious Societies, full and exclusive Powers to regulate the concerns of its own communion.

*Third.* That the Doctrines of the Gospel be maintained, as now professed by the church of England; and Uniformity of Worship be continued, as near as may be to the liturgy of said church.

*Fourth.* That the succession of the ministry be agreeable to the usage which requireth the three orders of bishops, priests and deacons; that the rights and powers of the same respectively be ascertained; and that they be exercised according to reasonable Laws, to be duly made.

*Fifth.* That to make canons or laws, there be no other authority than that of a representative body of the clergy and laity conjointly.

*Sixth.* That no powers be delegated to a general ecclesiastical government, except such as cannot conveniently be exercised by the clergy and vestries in their respective congregations.

These six principles were included in the record of proceedings in Maryland, following the account of the Declaration of Rights drawn up by the Maryland clergy in 1783.

They were quoted as emanating from Philadelphia, being included in the Maryland record because they were "similar to the foregoing Declaration of religious Rights, and partly founded thereon."<sup>17</sup>

The exact relation of the actions taken in the two states is difficult to disentangle. For example, the lay delegates from two rectorless Pennsylvania churches wrote to their ex-rector, Dr. Smith, in Maryland for advice before going to the Philadelphia meeting. His reply was written May 23, 1784, but did not arrive in time for the main assembly. It was read by Dr. White to the newly appointed standing committee the next day, May 26, 1784. Smith's suggestion was similar to the action already taken by the Philadelphians; he recommended the appointment of a committee to meet with similar committees from other states "about next October, to fix on a plan for all our Churches, both in respect to Discipline and our Church Service."<sup>18</sup> In the same letter Dr. Smith stated that he had already sent Dr. Magaw (the rector of St. Paul's church in Philadelphia) an account of the Maryland clergy convention of 1783. Either group may have influenced, or been influenced by, the other. As a seminary professor, Dr. Smith had a special interest in the problem of ordination, scarcely mentioned in Philadelphia. He advised his ex-parishioners that "something fundamental ought also to be agreed upon respecting Ordination," suggesting that the same stand might be taken in Pennsylvania as had been taken in Maryland by "declaring that Episcopal Ordination is an indispensable qualification for every person who may be desirous to hold any living in our Church."

Both Dr. Smith's concern about ordination and the influence of the Philadelphia group appeared clearly in the

<sup>17</sup> *Maryland Address*, p. 13.

<sup>18</sup> Wm. Smith, *Letter to Messrs. Benjamin L. Cotman and Benjamin Johnson*, May 23, 1784, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 39, 40, footnote 2. There is an attested copy of the minutes of the meeting of May 26, 1784 in the New York Historical Society.



meeting of the Maryland convention held June 22, 1784, at Annapolis.<sup>19</sup> The official account of the proceedings started with the statement that the convention was "for the purpose of organizing the said *Church*, and providing a Succession in her *Ministry* agreeable to the principles of the *American Revolution*." The first action of the meeting was the ratification by the lay delegates of the previous acts and resolutions passed by the clergy at their convention of August, 1783. This was the first time the laity had been included in Maryland. On being shown the Declaration of Rights previously accepted by the clergy, "the Lay-Delegates desired leave to retire and consult upon the same; and on their Return reported . . . that they had read and discussed the same, Paragraph by Paragraph, and unanimously approved thereof." The laity having thus caught up, as it were, with their clergy, the meeting proceeded to appoint a joint committee "to essay a Plan of ecclesiastical Government for the Episcopal Church in this State." The Pennsylvania principles had been offered as the broad and general basis for a federal organization, but the Maryland group wanted their committee to deal with specific problems. They were to define

the Duties of *Bishops, Priests, and Deacons* in *Matters spiritual*; and the Rights and Duties both of Clergy and Laity in *general Synods or Conventions* for the Government of this Church, preserving Uniformity of Worship, and the reclaiming or excluding from Church-Communion scandalous Members, whether of the *Clerical* or *Lay* Order.

Though the committee did not have time to fulfill its commission, they did return with certain fundamental principles on which they had agreed. In the earlier Maryland Declaration and in the Pennsylvania statement, the first principle had been on the necessity of remaining free from foreign

<sup>19</sup> *Maryland Address*, 1. See also pp. 15, 16, and 17 for the statements quoted from the meeting that follow here.

jurisdiction. In 1784 the Maryland committee still maintained the necessity of independence, but with an interesting addition, again pointing up their concern about ordination. Any of the clergy, they declared, "who may be under the Necessity of obtaining Ordination in any foreign State with a View to officiate or settle in this State" must refuse to subscribe to "any Obligation of Obedience, *civil* or *canonical* to any foreign Power or Authority whatsoever."

The second statement of the committee was an effort to define clerical powers. It began with their view of the episcopate:

According to what we conceive to be the true *Apostolic Institution*, the Duty and Office of a *Bishop*, differs in nothing from that of other *Priests*, except in the power of Ordination and Confirmation; and in the Right of Precedency in ecclesiastical Meetings or Synods, and shall accordingly be so exercised in this Church.

No changes in the three orders of the clergy were contemplated, but if they became necessary, the authority to act would be vested in "the *joint Voice and Authority of a Representative Body of the Clergy and Laity*, at future ecclesiastical Synods or Conventions." In this, the Maryland group was in complete harmony with the Pennsylvanians.

The third statement was an effort to separate explicitly the powers of the clergy and laity. It was decided "that the Clergy should be deemed adequate Judges . . . of the *literary, moral* and *religious* Qualifications and Abilities of Persons fit to be nominated and appointed to the different Orders of the Ministry." The approving and receiving of any of the three orders, however, was to rest "in the People who are to support them, and to receive the Benefit of their Ministry." The right of the individual parishes to a voice in selecting their own rectors was fairly general in America, where it had developed largely from necessity. More interest-

ing, considering the Pennsylvania point of view, was the decision that the Maryland clergy should retain the right of electing their own bishop without lay interference.

The last of the main principles set up an annual state convention, consisting of the clergy and one lay delegate from each parish, to be the governing body for the churches in Maryland. However, the desire to be ruled by established law, so characteristic of the English Church, was recognized in that "fundamental Rules, once duly made," could not be altered except by a two-thirds majority vote of the convention "duly assembled."

Besides the four main principles agreed upon, three articles for future consideration were submitted to the convention, all dealing with the extent of the authority of the proposed governing body of clergy and laity. It was suggested that they have the power (1) to discipline "scandalous Members, whether *Lay* or *Clerical*"; (2) to suspend or dismiss clergymen of any of the three orders; and (3) to be responsible for the necessary alterations in the canons and liturgy of the Church, as well as for "Points of Doctrine to be professed and taught in the Church." The final business of the meeting was the appointing of a committee of three clergymen and three laymen, to digest and publish the proceedings of the various Maryland conventions, and also

to confer and treat with any *Committees* that may be appointed in the *Sister-States*, for considering and drawing up a Plan of such Alterations in the Liturgy of the Church, as may be necessary under the *American Revolution* for *Uniformity of Worship*, and *Church Government*.<sup>20</sup>

The federal plan of reorganization was well under way in both Maryland and Pennsylvania by the summer of 1784.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2. A page with two additional constitutions concerning the future discipline and government of the Church has been pasted in the back of the copy of the *Maryland Address* in Harvard University Library. Discussed in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-33.

The next step was to establish broader contacts with the Episcopal churches scattered throughout the United States. The committees from the Middle States agreed on the necessity of holding a General Convention of clergy and lay representatives, which would be authorized to govern the Episcopal churches throughout the nation. October, 1784, had been set as the date for the first general meeting, to be held in New York. However, Dr. White's plan called for representatives from all the churches, and it remained to interest the parishes farther north and farther south. A Committee of Correspondence had been appointed for Pennsylvania at their meeting in March, 1784, consisting of three laymen and three clergy, of whom Dr. White was the central figure.<sup>21</sup> A good picture of the events leading up to the first General Convention in the fall can be obtained through an examination of his correspondence during the summer of 1784.

In June, 1784, White received several reports from the churches to the north. On June 19, Beach reported for the committee appointed at the Brunswick meeting to attend the Connecticut clergy convention. He wrote that "the Clergy there appear well-disposed to join the Episcopal Church in the other States, in forming Regulations for the government of it, and for preserving uniformity of worship."<sup>22</sup> However, they objected to the presence of lay delegates. Beach explained

that it was thought necessary in some of the States, particularly in Pennsylvania, to associate some respectable Characters amongst the Laity, in order to give weight and importance to the Church; but we meant not to prescribe to OTHER STATES.

<sup>21</sup> *Journal of early Pa. Meetings*, p. 26. Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> The minutes of the Connecticut Clergy convention, on which Beach was reporting, are in the library of General Theological Seminary, New York, New York.

## The Connecticut clergy replied

that they thought themselves fully adequate to the Business of representing the Episcopal Church in their State, and that the Laity did not EXPECT, or WISH to be called in as delegates on such an occasion; but, would, with full confidence, trust matters PURELY ECCLESIASTICAL to their clergy.

They unanimously agreed to send a clergy committee to represent them at the General Convention in New York in the fall, and also to try to get representation from the churches in other New England states.

On June 21, 1784, a report from the Episcopal churches in New England was sent White by the Rev. Samuel Parker, rector of Trinity Church, Boston. White had been the first to contact Parker, having used an unexpected opportunity through a personal friend to send him the minutes of the Pennsylvania meeting. Parker had promptly made copies of the minutes, and had sent one to each of the Massachusetts clergy. Some points were not clear to Parker. He wondered whether the meeting at Philadelphia had intended to plan for the Episcopal churches in all the states or only in Pennsylvania. He then forwarded questions concerning a bishop.<sup>23</sup> Did their insistence on complete independence from foreign powers mean to preclude the possibility of obtaining a bishop? What plan did they have for securing a bishop, and for supporting one? He also wanted to know what had been done in Pennsylvania about alterations and additions to the liturgy since the war. In Massachusetts the only change so far had been the omission of the prayers for the royal family. He wanted to know "how the Churches at the Southward manage in this affair, that if possible a Uniformity as far as

<sup>23</sup> No reference was made to Seabury, but Parker was at this time in correspondence with the Connecticut clergy, having been one of the first to be told of the Woodbury meeting.

the civil government of each State will permit may be maintained." Parker closed his letter with the assurance of his cooperation: "I shall take Pleasure in exerting my little Influence and Endeavours to promote a Uniformity of Government and Worship, and preserving the Communion of the Episcopal Churches in the United States."

A letter from the Rev. Edward Bass of Newburyport, Massachusetts, to the Rev. Samuel Parker, written June 21, 1784, showed that the two men held much the same point of view. Parker made no reference to lay representation, but Bass began his letter by agreeing with the Pennsylvanian report that the authority to make canons and laws should be in a representative group of clergy and laity conjointly. Like Parker, he felt the need of a careful revision of the liturgy, with new prayers for the new government. He, too, was concerned about procuring a bishop, considering it improper to hold any ecclesiastical consultations without one. He asked if any word had been received from Seabury. The uneasiness felt in New England at the apparent indifference of the Pennsylvania group to the apostolic succession was reflected in his query:

Is anything like to be done towards the regular continuance of our Succession? for I hope Messers White & Brethren have it not in contemplation to constitute their three orders *de novo*.

White followed up his letter to Parker with fuller explanations, outlining in some detail the system of representation which he hoped would be used by all the states. He insisted on the importance of having lay delegates, saying:

I know, revd. Sir, that ye introducing the Laity into our Scheme is thought exceptionable by some of our Brethren. In answer, I will not pretend any apprehensions of ye Clergy acquiring extravagant Powers; altho' could I foresee such an

event, it would confirm me in my principle. But under present Circumstances, I rather expect, that without ye Laity, there will be no Govt. at all.<sup>24</sup>

Without lay participation, the church government would lack authority, for "whatever ye Clergy alone shall do will be treated as what a Cong. may either receive or reject & as not even binding on ye dissenting Members of their own Body." The result would be an impossible multiplication of differences, for the separate congregations "will gradually widen in Doctrine, and Worship, agreeing perhaps in ye single circumstance of their requiring episcopal Ordination." In regard to a bishop, White made two comments. To ease the problem of support, he wondered whether some states might not be divided into smaller districts, "whereby each Bp. having a very moderate superintendence, might be also a Parish Minister & would not require a separate Revenue for his Support, ye getting such a Revenue being perhaps impracticable?" On the problem of obtaining a bishop, he wrote:

On ye Subject of procuring ye succession I shall only observe, that if any private Measures said to have been undertaken for this End shd prove successful, I think ye whole Church shd gladly avail itself of ye Acquisition. If not, an Application to our Mother Church from representatives of ye epl. Church generally will be surely too respectable to be slighted; & such an Application might be easily framed by correspondence among ourselves.

White was always consistent: first, the representative governing body, then the bishop. The letter closed with an invitation to Parker to make criticisms or suggestions, White promising to be "as friendly in attending to your Sentiments as I am free in offering my own."

<sup>24</sup> White, Letter to Parker, undated fragment; in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-60.

Besides interesting new people in the federal plan of reorganization, White corresponded regularly with those who were already supporting it. A letter written by the Rev. William West of Baltimore, July 5, 1784, illustrates the shared thinking that was maintained between Maryland and Philadelphia. West began by agreeing with White that "a Communication of Sentiments among its Clergy is necessary in the present circumstances of our Common Church; and that their most vigorous Exertions, and harmonizing Affections are equally so." The point stressed by West was the idea of diocesan independence. He believed in the authority of the General Convention as a governing body, but he wanted to be sure that the Church in each state was guaranteed "all Rights and Authority that are essentially necessary to form and compleat an Entire Church." The kind of union he advocated was similar to that adopted by the civil government: a real confederation, in which each state maintained its own independence. He wrote:

For this end it appears to me that no more is necessary than such a Convocation as you mention (or something adequate to it) for the Purpose of Establishing throughout the Confederated States, an Uniformity of Worship and of Church Government.

When this foundation is once happily laid, the unimportant local variations of the several State Chhs. from each other, according to their particular Circumstances, cannot in my apprehension, either break its Communion or injure the Prosperity of the Church in general.

West agreed on the importance of lay representation, and also insisted on the presence of a bishop, who, if necessary, could be imported from England. "Under the Presidency and Influence of such a Character," he believed, the liturgical revisions necessitated by the Revolution would be so made



that the Laity would be as ready to approve of the Liturgy and Canons thus adapted to the Civil Governmt. of these States, as the Clergy would be unwilling to depart from the fundamental Principles of Episcopacy, and further than necessary from the beautiful Form, and approved Standard before them.

At the close of his letter, he returned to his emphasis on diocesan independence:

The limits of each State appears to me the most proper, as well as the most natural District for each Bishop. In this case each Chh. will be entire and independent, as the State in which it is; and will naturally form the proper Diocese of its Bishop.

Towards the end of July, 1784, White received a reply to letters he had sent to the Virginia clergy. The Rev. David Griffith acknowledged the receipt of two letters from White, one to himself and one to the clergy Convention in Richmond. He regretted he had shown them to a few of the clergy only, and had not presented them to the convention as a whole. The situation of the Episcopal clergy in Virginia was so bad that they could not even raise the question of delegates for the coming General Convention in New York. He wrote:

The Episcopal Church in Virginia is so fettered by Laws, that the Clergy could do no more than petition for a repeal of those laws—for liberty to introduce Ordination and Government and to revise and alter the Liturgy. The session is passed over without our being able to accomplish this.

The few clergymen who had been shown the letter were in sympathy with the proposals of the Pennsylvania clergy, and with the coming New York convention, but no delegate had been appointed to attend from Virginia. For, he explained

in the present State of Ecclesiastical affairs in this State, the Clergy could not, with propriety, and indeed without great

danger to the Church, empower any Persons to agree to the least alteration whatever.

Griffith, however, decided to be present, unofficially. Having some personal business in New York, he planned to attend to it at the time of the General Convention, possibly arriving a few days in advance. At that time he promised White a fuller explanation of the situation of the clergy in Virginia in personal conversation.

Griffith did not exaggerate the critical state of ecclesiastical affairs in 1784 in Virginia, where the problem of reorganization was intensified by the fact that the Church of England had been the established Church throughout the colonial period. The Episcopal Church was violently opposed by the Dissenters, who demanded freedom from the oppression of the Establishment.<sup>25</sup> Not only were they taxed for the support of the Church of England, but only Anglican clergy could legally perform marriages and conduct services whenever they pleased. Led by the Baptists and Presbyterians, the Dissenters sent many anti-Episcopal petitions to the legislature. One was sent in May, 1774, by a Baptist group.<sup>26</sup> On June 5, 1775, the Hanover Presbytery presented a Memorial, an excellent statement of the principle of religious freedom.<sup>27</sup> This was followed, on June 13, 1775, by another Baptist petition.<sup>28</sup> A year later the first official step towards religious freedom in Virginia was taken: the principle of freedom of worship was accepted in the Declaration of Rights, passed by the leg-

<sup>25</sup> A. P. Stokes, *Church and State in the United States* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1950), I, 366-396.

<sup>26</sup> *Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1773-1776*, p. 92.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189. Stokes, *op. cit.*, pp. 375-377. Also G. M. Brydon, *Virginia's Mother Church* (Philadelphia: The Church Historical Society), II, chap. XVII.

<sup>28</sup> *Journals of the House of Burgesses, 1773-1776*, p. 225. Of the many petitions sent by Dissenters to the legislature, these three were selected as adequate for this survey.

islature, June 12, 1776.<sup>29</sup> Antagonism against the Episcopal Church continued to increase.

A second problem created by the years of the Establishment remained to plague the Episcopal Church in Virginia: the civil legislature retained legal control, as no separation of Church and state had yet been effected. In July, 1776, the same body of men who adopted Virginia's Declaration of Rights, ordered the royal prayers dropped from the liturgy in the Prayer Book, and prayers for the new government substituted.<sup>30</sup> In November, 1776, a law was passed that Dissenters could no longer be taxed for the support of the Church of England, and the salaries of all Anglican clergy were suspended for one year, beginning January 1, 1777.<sup>31</sup> As state support of clergy salaries was never resumed, this is sometimes given as the date of the disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Virginia.<sup>32</sup> However, though no longer supported by the government, the Church continued to act for it officially. Anglican clergy were still the only ones permitted by the state to perform marriages. Furthermore, Anglican parish vestries still acted for the state in caring for the poor.<sup>33</sup> Even after clergy salaries were permanently stopped in

<sup>29</sup> Stokes, *op. cit.*, I, 380. The statement on Freedom of worship in sec. 16 of the Declaration.

<sup>30</sup> G. M. Brydon, "The Revision of the Prayer Book by an American Legislature," *Hist. Mag.*, XIX (June, 1950), pp. 133-138.

<sup>31</sup> *Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia, Anno Domini, 1776*, p. 90. For an account of the legislation, cf. H. J. Eckenrode, *Separation of Church and State in Virginia* (Richmond; Davis Bottom, 1910), pp. 52-53. The plight of the clergy is revealed in the following letter from the Rev. Patrick Henry (uncle of the more famous man of the same name), rector of St. Paul's Church, Hanover County, to his vestry, April 23, 1777: "And as the State of things in this Colony is without precedent, the matter proposed is quite new to me. I chuse to trust the management of my Salary to you Gentlemen, both as to setting a Price upon the Tobacco, and the Method of paying me; hereby giving my full and free consent to whatever you shall think fit to do upon the whole." (Brydon, *Virginia's Mother Church*, II, chap. XIX.)

<sup>32</sup> Eckenrode, *op. cit.*, p. 53, accepts this as the date of disestablishment. Stokes, *op. cit.* I, 383, disagrees.

<sup>33</sup> Eckenrode, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-73.

1779, the hope of government help was not abandoned.<sup>34</sup> In 1783, the idea of a general assessment, to be used for the support of all religious bodies, was revived.<sup>35</sup> The civil legislature still controlled church affairs.

By 1784, the situation had become especially acute. The question of a general assessment was still being debated,<sup>36</sup> and the Baptists were still petitioning for the right to conduct their own services freely, including the marriage ceremony.<sup>37</sup> On June 4, 1784, the Protestant Episcopal churches in Virginia petitioned the legislature for the right to incorporate, to regulate their own spiritual concerns, and to own property that formerly belonged to the Church of England.<sup>38</sup> A storm of protest resulted. Besides demanding complete separation of church and state, some dissenters sought the destruction of Episcopal churches. The Presbyterians petitioned the legislature against the incorporation of the Church, and against its ownership of lands "procured at the expense of the whole community."<sup>39</sup> Not until after the General Convention of the Episcopal Church held in New York in the fall of 1784, was the fate of the Church in Virginia settled. In December, 1784, overseers of the poor were appointed, relieving the

<sup>34</sup> *Journal of the House of Delegates of the Commonwealth of Virginia, June 17, 1779* (Richmond, 1828), p. 53.

<sup>35</sup> The debate over the general assessment appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* during November, 1783. On November 8, 1783, a letter to the legislature against financial help to religion, signed Lactantius appeared on the front page. It was followed on November 15 and 22, 1783 by long articles, signed Philanthropos, on the need of sustaining religion in general by law. The matter was not settled until January 16, 1786, when Jefferson's Statute on Religious Freedom was passed. (Stokes, *op. cit.*, I, 392-397.)

<sup>36</sup> *Journal of the House of Delegates, May 15, 1784*, p. 8.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, May 26, 1784, p. 20.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* June 4, 1784, p. 23. The petition is reprinted in G. M. Brydon, "David Griffith, 1742-1789, First Bishop-Elect of Virginia," *Hist. mag.*, IX (September, 1940), 215-217.

<sup>39</sup> *Journal of the House of Delegates, November 2, 1784*, p. 18. Cf. Eckenrode, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-89. Also J. B. Smith, President of Sidney-Hampden College (Presbyterian), letter to James Madison, June 21, 1784, against incorporation on the grounds that the assembly had no right to legislate for the Church. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

vestries of their civil duties, and the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia was incorporated.<sup>40</sup> The ownership of church property remained indefinite. In general resident clergy retained the glebe lands, but in many cases church property was confiscated.<sup>41</sup> When Griffith wrote to White, in July, 1784, the future of the former Church of England in Virginia was far from certain.

A final comment in Griffith's letter showed how difficult it was to assemble representation from the widely scattered Episcopal churches in the United States in 1784. White had hoped to establish connection with the churches further south through Griffith, who, however, reported that "no notice of the intended meeting has been sent to North Carolina; none of the Clergy present, at the time of receiving your letter, having any acquaintance with the Brethren in that State."<sup>42</sup>

In August, 1784, White again turned his attention to New England, replying to Parker's June letter. His answer to each of Parker's questions was the same: the first step in reorganizing should be "ye forming a general Constitution for ye Continent." After an authoritative governing body had been established on a representative basis, then the vital needs of the church could be met: state constitutions drawn up, bishops secured, alterations made in the liturgy. White hoped that the coming meeting in New York would take proper measures for procuring an episcopate. He saw no

<sup>40</sup> *Journal of the House of Delegates*, December 22, 1784, p. 77. Cf. Eckenrode, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-101. Also Stokes, *op. cit.*, I., 384-387.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Eckenrode, *op. cit.*, chap. VI. The Baptists and Presbyterians were still urging that the church property be sold, in 1787. (*Ibid.*, p. 131.)

<sup>42</sup> Actually, the Episcopal churches in North Carolina were too few and too weak to assist in the national reorganization of the Church. Their first organizational meeting was held June 5, 1790, at Tarborough, N. C., two clergymen and two laymen attending. Cf. J. B. Chesire, Jr., *The Early Conventions: Held at Tarborough, anno Domini 1790, 1793 and 1794—The First Effort to Organize the Church in North Carolina: Raleigh, N. C., 1882.*

objection to bringing a bishop from England, "he becoming on his Arrival a Citizen of ye U. S." In the matter of the liturgy, White explained that in Philadelphia they had made one change, altering the prayer for Parliament to apply to Congress and all others vested with civil authority. He continued

we are sensible of the Imperfection of our Plan & that ye Litany and other prayers ought to be accomodated to ye political Change; but, lest Uniformity should be precluded, we chose to leave this to a general Communication of Sentiment.

In closing, White expressed his hope of seeing Parker at the General Convention in New York in October.

Parker was actively interested in the coming Convention. Through his efforts, a preliminary meeting of the clergy from Massachusetts and Rhode Island was held in Boston, September 8, 1784.<sup>43</sup> The minutes of this meeting, a letter to the Pennsylvania Committee of Correspondence, and a personal letter were sent to White by Parker, September 10, 1784. The clergy at Boston accepted the six principles drawn up by the Pennsylvanians, adding "a Restriction or explanatory clause to the first and fifth Article, more for the Sake of avoiding any Mistakes hereafter than because we suppose we differ from you in Sentiment." In the first article, they inserted a statement insuring the right to seek consecration "from some regular Episcopal foreign Power." In the fifth article, they inserted a clause to prevent the lay vote from

<sup>43</sup> Boston Convention, Letter to the Pennsylvania Committee, September 8, 1784. (N. Y. Hist. Soc.) Reprinted with the minutes of the meeting and Parker's letter to White in "Minutes of the First Conventions of the Diocese of Massachusetts Journals, 1784-1790," *Hist. Mag.*, IX (June, 1940), pp. 154-166. See also Minutes of a Meeting of the Episcopal Clergy of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, held at Boston, September 8, 1784. [N. Y. Hist. Soc.]

exceeding that of the clergy. This precaution, Parker explained in his personal letter to White, was due to the fact that because so many of their churches were without clergy they would be seriously out-numbered by lay representatives. The convention, therefore, proposed that

each Church chuse one Lay Delegate in conjunction with their Minister & that those Churches that are destitute of a Clergyman shd chuse one of the Neighboring Ministers to represent them with one of their own Laymen, & in this mode they think there is no great danger of their having too much Power.

A Committee of Correspondence was appointed to keep in touch with the churches in Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania. Parker was elected as delegate to represent both states, if a General Convention were held. Parker, who had heard of the proposed meeting only indirectly through White's references to it, did not plan to go to New York unless he learned that it was surely to be held. "Should any general Meeting of the Churches be proposed, we shall be obliged to you for Notice thereof as we are perfectly disposed to adopt any measures calculated to promote the Welfare of our Church."

That the Boston convention were not in complete harmony with the Pennsylvania group was made clear in the letter which accompanied the minutes of their meeting. They wrote:

It is our unanimous Opinion that it is beginning at the wrong end to attempt to organize our Church before we have obtained a head. Our Churches at present resemble the scattered Limbs of the body without any common Centre of Union, or Principle to animate the whole. We cannot conceive it probable or even possible to carry the Plan you have pointed out into execution before an Episcopate is obtained to direct our Motions, & by a delegated Authority to claim our Assent.

The Boston group stated their desire for a bishop consecrated in the English line. Though they felt doubtful of their ability, as an independent group, to procure consecration, they believed "that a regular Application made by a representative Body of Episcopal Churches in America would easily obtain a consecrated head."<sup>44</sup> In the opinion of the Boston men, the purpose of a General Assembly was not to establish itself as a governing body, but to act as the medium for procuring true Episcopal government. If a general meeting should be agreed upon, the New Englanders wanted to be represented. They wrote:

We are of Opinion that we ought to leave no means untried to procure a regular Succession of the Episcopacy before we think of obtaining it in an irregular Manner. . . . We are extremely anxious for the Preservation of our Communion & the Continuance of an Uniformity of Doctrine & Worship, but we see not how this can be maintained without a common head, & are therefore desirous of uniting with you in such Measures as shall be found expedient & proper for the common good.

In recording the Boston meeting in his *Memoirs*, Bishop White made no reference to the letter sent to the Pennsylvania Committee, in which basic disagreement was evident. He quoted their version of the six fundamental principles, "which have evidently an allusion to what had been done in Philadelphia in the preceding May," commenting briefly on the two added restrictions.<sup>45</sup> Their desire to be certain that an application to a foreign government for consecration would not be excluded by the first principle "was agreeable to in-

<sup>44</sup> It should be remembered that this group was in touch with the Connecticut clergy. Undoubtedly, they hoped that a representative body requesting a bishop might overcome the objections raised by the English bishops to Seabury's consecration. In his personal letter to White, Parker asked for an opinion as to whether "it is probable Congress will interfere in any matter of an Ecclesiastical Nature & whether they would countenance a Request made to England for a Bishop." (N. Y. Hist. Soc.)

<sup>45</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 82.



tentions entertained in framing the latter, although not expressed." In regard to the equal vote for clergy and laity, White stated that "this matter was afterward settled to mutual satisfaction, in the meeting in New York." Minor disagreements were duly recorded, but there was no mention of the insistence of the New England convention that it was impossible to begin reorganization without a bishop.

The important organizational convention, for which White had worked so hard, met in New York, October 6-7, 1784. Clergy and laymen, representing the Episcopal churches of nine states, were present. White explained that the meeting must be referred to

as a voluntary one, and not an authorized convention, because there were no authorities from the churches in the several states, even in the appointments of the members, which were made from the congregations, to which they respectively belonged; except of Mr. Parker, from Massachusetts, of Mr. Marshall, from Connecticut, and of those who attended from Pennsylvania; even from those states, there was no further authority, than to deliberate and propose.<sup>46</sup>

The nine states represented were as follows: Massachusetts and Rhode Island, by the Rev. Samuel Parker; Connecticut, by the Rev. John Marshall; New York, by six clergymen, including Provoost, Beach, Benjamin Moore, and three laymen; New Jersey, by one clergyman and three laymen; Pennsylvania, by three clergymen, including White and Magaw, and four laymen; Maryland, by Dr. William Smith; Delaware, by two clergymen and one layman; and Virginia,

<sup>46</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 80. Parker had been appointed by the Boston clergy convention of September 8, 1784. Marshall had been appointed by the Connecticut clergy convention of the same date, held in New Haven. (The manuscript record of the meeting is in the General Theological Seminary Library.) The Standing Committee, appointed by the convention of clergy and laymen held in Philadelphia, May 24, 1784, delegated their authority by special vote to those who attended the New York convention from Pennsylvania. (Perry, *Hist. Notes*, p. 39.)

unofficially, by the Rev. David Griffith.<sup>47</sup> Dr. Smith was chosen to preside, and the Rev. Benjamin Moore, to serve as secretary.<sup>48</sup>

According to Dr. Smith's minutes, the business of the meeting began with the reading of letters of appointment, followed by communications from the clergy of Massachusetts Bay, and of Connecticut. The letters were not inserted in the minutes, as intended, but we know that both documents from the New England clergy stressed the necessity of securing a bishop as the first step in reorganization.<sup>49</sup> White recorded only that the Rev. Mr. Marshall

read to the assembly a paper, which expressed his being only empowered to announce, that the clergy of Connecticut had taken measures for the obtaining of an Episcopate; that until their design, in that particular, should be accomplished, they could do nothing; but that as soon as they should have succeeded, they would come forward, with their bishop, for the doing of what the general interests of the Church might require.<sup>50</sup>

The business of the first day was concluded with the appointment of a committee "to essay the fundamental principles of a general Constitution," and also "to frame and

<sup>47</sup> Delaware is the only one of the nine states not previously discussed. Though there is evidence of earlier meetings, their first recorded convention was in 1791. N. W. Rightmyer, *The Anglican Church in Delaware* (Philadelphia, 1947), p. 181. Hereinafter referred to as Rightmyer, *Delaware*.

<sup>48</sup> Smith, Minutes of the Convention held in New York, October 6th and 7th, 1784, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-5. The manuscript in the handwriting of Dr. Smith, from which the second part of the minutes (Perry, p. 5) was copied, is in the New York Historical Society.

<sup>49</sup> The minutes of the meeting of the Episcopal clergy of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, held in Boston September 8, 1784, state that a letter similar to the one sent by the convention to the Pennsylvania clergy was to be presented to the New York clergy. (N. Y. Hist. Soc.) The letter from the Connecticut convention of September 9, 1784, to be read by Marshall, is printed in full in Beardsley, *Seabury*, pp. 196-197. Original manuscript at General Theological Seminary.

<sup>50</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

propose to the Convention, a proper substitute for the State Prayers in the Liturgy, to be used for the sake of uniformity, till a further Review shall be undertaken by general Authority and Consent of the Church.”<sup>51</sup> Chosen to serve on the committee were four laymen and four clergymen: for the clergy, Dr. Smith, Dr. White, Mr. Parker, and Mr. Provoost.

The next day the committee reported, making seven recommendations which were approved by the meeting as a whole. These principles which were to serve as the basis for a general ecclesiastical constitution were as follows:<sup>52</sup>

I. That there shall be a general Convention of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

II. That the Episcopal Church in each State, send deputies to the Convention, consisting of Clergy and Laity.

III. That associated Congregations in two or more States, may send Deputies jointly.

IV. That the said Church shall maintain the Doctrines of the Gospel as now held by the Church of England, and shall adhere to the Liturgy of the said Church, as far as shall be consistent with the American Revolution and the Constitutions of the respective States.

V. That in every State where there shall be a Bishop duly consecrated and settled, he shall be considered as a member of the Convention *ex Officio*.<sup>53</sup>

VI. That the Clergy and Laity assembled in Convention, shall deliberate in one Body, but shall vote separately; and the concurrence of both shall be necessary to give validity to every Measure.

VII. That the first meeting of the Convention shall be at *Philadelphia*, the Tuesday before the Feast of St. Michael next;

<sup>51</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*

<sup>52</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>53</sup> This was the only one of the propositions presented by the committee that was altered by the general group. The committee had proposed that, if such a bishop were resident in any state, he should serve as president of the convention. (White, Letter to Parker, June, 1785. Also, Parker. Letter to White, September 14, 1785.)

to which it is hoped, and earnestly desired, That the Episcopal Churches in the respective States, will send their Clerical and Lay Deputies, duly instructed and authorized to proceed on the necessary Business herein proposed for their Deliberation.

One further piece of business was accomplished before the meeting adjourned. A special recommendation was passed urging that a committee of not less than two clergymen be set up in every state to examine any persons desiring to serve as lay readers, and that no church accept any reader not certified by the examiners as qualified.<sup>54</sup>

On the whole, White was pleased with progress made at the New York meeting. In his *Memoirs*, he stated that

it seemed a great matter gained, to lay what promised to be a foundation for the continuing of the Episcopal Church, in the leading points of her doctrine, discipline and worship; yet with such an accomodation to local circumstances, as might be expected to secure the concurrence of the great body of her members; and without any exterior opposition, to threaten the oversetting of the scheme.<sup>55</sup>

A brief reference to Marshall and Parker contained the only suggestion of the resistance to his plan within the group. White wrote:

Although at the meeting . . . there were present two clergymen from the eastern states; yet it now appeared, that there was no probability, for the present, of the aid of the churches in those states, in the measures begun for the obtaining of a representative body of the Church at large.<sup>56</sup>

In spite of the smoldering opposition that boded ill for the future, White was justified in being pleased with the meet-

<sup>54</sup> Minutes of the New York Convention, October 7, 1784, Smith, *op. cit.*

<sup>55</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 81.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

ing. The federal plan of reorganization had been successfully launched.

Before proceeding to the tensions of 1785, we must follow the progress made in 1784 by the supporters of the ecclesiastical plan.

## B. THE ECCLESIASTICAL PLAN FOR REORGANIZATION

In tracing the development of the federal plan for the reorganization of the Episcopal Church, it has been necessary to follow the activities of the churches in many states, but for the development of the ecclesiastical plan our interest is centered on the activities of a single person: Samuel Seabury. The success of the Connecticut plan depended entirely on his being consecrated bishop in the apostolic succession.

There were, however, many difficulties involved in getting the ecclesiastical plan started. Clearly, it was impossible to introduce into America the English politico-ecclesiastical system. In England a bishop was appointed by the government, and then inducted into a definite see. At his consecration he became a peer of the realm, receiving a living adequate to maintain the dignity and prestige of his new rank. What would, what could, an American Episcopate be? It was no easy matter to disentangle the political and ecclesiastical aspects of the bishop's functions. It seems very obvious to us today, brought up as we are on the accepted principle of the separation of Church and state, but in 1784 the idea was new. As Dr. White wrote, "Some were startled at the very circumstance, of taking the stand of an independent Church."<sup>57</sup> Could a bishop of the Church of England exist without political support? It is evident from the exchange of letters between Seabury and his friends that they were working out their concept of an American Episcopacy as they went along. With their eyes fixed on their goal of securing a duly consecrated bishop, they met circumstances

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

as they arose, swerving as little as possible from the familiar ways.

By the end of 1783, as we have seen, Seabury was convinced that there was no hope of his procuring the succession from the English bishops unless he could get an official sanction from the Connecticut State Assembly. For the purpose of deciding how to procure such a document for him, the Connecticut clergy met in convention at Wallingford, January 13, 1784. Three of the clergy, Bela Hubbard, Abraham Jarvis, and Jeremiah Leaming, were appointed to "collect the opinions of the leading members of the Assembly concerning an application by the clergy of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut for the legal protection of a bishop for said Church."<sup>58</sup> On February 5, 1784, they were able to write a report to Seabury which must have brought them new hope. They had been assured by the legislators consulted, that there would be no objection to the introduction of a bishop. An act had already been passed, assuring all Christian denominations freedom to organize. The legislators felt it would be unwise

for the Assembly to meddle at all with the business. The introduction of a bishop on the present footing, without anything more, in their opinion would be the easiest and securest way in which it could be done, and we might be sure of his protection.<sup>59</sup>

The Act referred to, though not yet published, was being copied by the clerk and sent to Seabury to use to satisfy the English bishops as to the attitude of the state. The committee

<sup>58</sup> Minutes of the Conventions of the Clergy of Connecticut for the years 1776, 1784, and 1785, *Hist. Mag.*, III (March, 1934), pp. 56-64. Compiled from the Jarvis Papers by E. C. Chorley. Hereinafter referred to as *Early Conn. Conventions*.

<sup>59</sup> Leaming, Jarvis and Hubbard, Letter to Seabury, February 5, 1784, in Beardsley, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-114. Manuscript draft of the letter in the General Theological Seminary Library.

had also discovered that Seabury personally would be acceptable to the assembly, in spite of his opposition to the American forces during the Revolution. Politically, there seemed nothing to fear from the American side.

The question of the status of a bishop in the States, however, was less encouraging. Seabury had raised the question as to the establishment of a definite diocese. The Connecticut clergy could only suggest that the clergy who had elected him, and the congregations in their charge, should be the ones to "prescribe the acknowledged boundaries of his diocese." On the matter of support for the bishop, it was clear that he would have to trust to voluntary contributions. There was no possibility of maintaining a bishop in Connecticut on the same scale in worldly matters as the English bishops. They wrote:

A Bishop in Connecticut must, in some degree, be of the primitive style. With patience and a share of primitive zeal, he may rest for support on the Church he serves, as head in her ministrations, unornamented with temporal dignity, and without the prof of secular power.

An Episcopate of this plain and simple character . . . we hope may pass unenvied, and its sacred functions be performed unobstructed.

The writers gave Seabury a chance to give up his quest, if he felt the financial insecurity would be too great, but Seabury never let the lack of money interfere with his duty. Actually, he could ill afford the long trip to England and the sixteen months' delay in London. There were frequent references in his letters to his financial needs. However, even without adequate funds, he was determined to secure the necessary consecration.

Seabury answered this letter from the Connecticut clergy on April 30, 1784, with a hasty note. The Act of the legislature they had promised, did not reach him until the end

of May. During that time he wrote frequently of his efforts to persuade the English bishops to act in his behalf. In his April letter he told of going at once to see the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of London and Oxford. The Bishop of London was most encouraging. He thought the letter from Connecticut "removed all the difficulties on your side of the water, and that nothing now was wanting but an Act of Parliament to dispense with the state oaths, and he imagined that would be easily obtained."<sup>60</sup> Unhappily, we learn from Seabury's next letter that the Bishop of London "is an amiable man, but very infirm, and I think his memory and other faculties are declining; he avoids business as much as possible."<sup>61</sup> The Bishop of Oxford, "who has been very attentive to me, speaks his mind without reserve, and is communicative, and hears me with patience and candor . . . a man of learning and business,"<sup>62</sup> felt the letter was inadequate.<sup>63</sup> The Archbishop of York "gave no opinion," but told Seabury to show the letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primate of all England.<sup>64</sup>

It took some time to get to see the archbishop, and when Seabury did succeed, "His Grace's behavior, though polite, I thought was cool and restrained."<sup>65</sup> His Grace objected to the letter for two reasons. For one thing, "the permission was only the permission of individuals, and not of the legislature"; he wanted a special official statement to reassure him. Surprisingly, he objected also because the application came from the clergy alone, to which Seabury replied "that had his Grace demanded the concurrence of the laity of the Church last autumn, it might easily have been procured."<sup>66</sup> In his letter of May 24, 1784, Seabury was no further along

<sup>60</sup> Seabury, Letter to the Connecticut Clergy, April 30, 1784.

<sup>61</sup> Seabury, Letter to Jarvis, May 3, 1784.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Seabury, Letter to the Connecticut Clergy, April 30, 1784.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Seabury, Letter to Jarvis, May 3, 1784.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*



towards a definite verdict than before. He had had several interviews with the archbishop, who insisted that he would do everything possible for Seabury, but was convinced he could not proceed without an act of Parliament. Seabury wrote:

His Grace says he sees no reason to despair; but yet that matters are in such a state of uncertainty that he knows not how to promise anything. He complains of the people in power; that there is no getting them to attend to anything in which their own party interest is not concerned.<sup>67</sup>

In spite of the admonition of his Grace, Seabury was beginning to despair. He had been in England nearly a year, without making any headway. As his doubts of the possibility of his succeeding increased, he consulted "some very respectable clergymen," who advised him to seek consecration through the Scottish succession.<sup>68</sup> He asked the Connecticut clergy

whether in case of failure here, it would be agreeable to the Clergy in Connecticut that I should apply to the non-juring Bishops in Scotland, who have been sounded and declare their readiness to carry the business into execution.<sup>69</sup>

Seabury knew that the clergy at home were growing discouraged too, for he referred to the fact that he had heard

<sup>67</sup> Seabury, Letter to Jarvis, May 24, 1784.

<sup>68</sup> Seabury, Letter to Jarvis, June 26, 1784.

<sup>69</sup> The question as to whether or not Seabury was instructed by the Connecticut clergy to seek consecration in Scotland has been much discussed. According to the Rev. Daniel Fogg, Seabury was told by the Woodbury convention that elected him, to seek consecration in Scotland, if refused in England. (D. Fogg, Letter to Parker, July 14, 1783, in Perry, *Hist. Notes*, p. 215.) According to the Rev. John Tyler, Fogg was not present at the Woodbury convention. (J. Tyler, Letter to the Rev. Samuel Peters, October 24, 1785. [N. Y. Hist. Soc.]) Seabury wrote to Jarvis stating clearly that he had not been authorized, but was acting on his own. (Seabury, Letter to Jarvis, September 7, 1784, *Hist. Mag.*, III [September, 1934], 176.)

"with some uneasiness" that three of the Connecticut clergy were expected to move to Nova Scotia "with a large proportion of their congregations." Though the news had operated against him, Seabury wrote that when questioned about it, he had answered that "one reason for their going is the hopes of enjoying their religion fully, which they cannot do in Connecticut without a Bishop."

The matter of consecration from the English bishops continued in an unsettled state through the summer of 1784. In a letter written to Abraham Jarvis, June 26, 1784, Seabury stated that the archbishops seemed satisfied about the Connecticut end, but that difficulties still existed on the English side.

These arise from the restrictions the Bishops are under about consecrating without the King's leave, and the doubt seems to be about the King's leave to consecrate a Bishop who is not to reside in his dominions; and about the validity of his dispensing with the oath, in case he has power to grant leave of consecration.

Seabury himself had come to the conclusion

that as there is no law existing relative to a Bishop who is to reside in a foreign state, the Archbishops are left to the general laws of the Christian Church, and have no need either of the King's leave or dispensation.

The archbishops, however, did not feel free to act. They consulted the state's attorney and the solicitor-general, who decided that an act of Parliament would be necessary before the consecration could take place. A month later Seabury wrote that as such an act was due to be considered by the Parliament then in session, he had decided to wait to see what happened. He continued: "If nothing be done, I shall give up the matter here as unattainable, and apply to the North,

unless I should receive contrary directions from the Clergy of Connecticut."

An act was passed by Parliament, August 13, 1784, but it was of no help to Seabury.<sup>70</sup> It enabled the Bishop of London to ordain foreign candidates as deacons and priests, omitting the oath of allegiance to the crown, but no permission was granted for Seabury's consecration.<sup>71</sup> Instead, Parliament ruled that the formal consent either of Congress or of a state legislative body must be obtained, and that a definite diocese must be established, with provision for an adequate living, before any bishop be sent to America.<sup>72</sup> This meant that there was no further hope of success for Seabury in England. On August 31, 1784, he wrote to Edinburgh to his friend Dr. Myles Cooper, formerly of New York:

Unhappily the connection of this Church with the State is so intimate that the Bishops can do little without the Consent of the Ministry, and the Ministry have refused to permit a Bishop to be consecrated for Connecticut, or for any other of the thirteen States, without the formal request, or at least consent, of Congress, which there is no chance of obtaining, and which the clergy would not apply for were the chance ever so good. They are content with having the Episcopal Church in Connecticut put upon the same footing as any other religious denomination.

Clearly the time had come to seek consecration somewhere else.

In his letters home, Seabury spoke only of seeking consecration in the Scottish succession, "said to be equal to any

<sup>70</sup> The act is printed in the Statutes at Large of the Parliament of England and Great Britain, as "24 Geo. III. Cap. XXXV." Quoted in R. C. Salomon, "British Legislation and American Episcopacy," *Hist. Mag.*, XX (September, 1951), 282-283.

<sup>71</sup> This enabled the Bishop of London to ordain two young men from Maryland, Mason Weems and Edward Gantt, who had been in England since the spring of 1783, seeking ordination. (*Ibid.*, pp. 279-283.)

<sup>72</sup> Beardsley, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

succession in the world,"<sup>73</sup> but at least two other possibilities were brought to his attention. Before the act permitting the Bishop of London to ordain foreign candidates was passed, John Adams, the United States minister at the English court, had asked the Danish minister whether American candidates for orders "could be gratified in the kingdom which he represented."<sup>74</sup> A series of inquiries from the Danish court and theological faculty resulted in a cordial expression of "their readiness to ordain candidates from America, on condition of their signing of the thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, with the exception of the political parts of them." Because of language difficulties, as an accommodation, the service would be performed in Latin. The Danish offer was for ordination, with no mention of consecration, but, as Dr. White wrote later:

It is reasonable to presume, that there would have been an equal readiness to the consecrating of bishops, had necessity required a recourse for it to any other source than the English Episcopacy, under which the American churches had been planted.

It is not certain whether Seabury ever considered approaching the Danish Church. According to W. J. Seabury, the bishop's grandson, it was Dr. Martin Routh, later President of Magdalen College, Oxford, who

disabused the mind of Dr. Seabury as to the validity of the Danish succession . . . and that the stricture of Dr. Routh may have removed from Dr. Seabury's mind any question which might have arisen there as to a resort to that succession, which it was understood at the time might have been imparted.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Seabury, Letter to Jarvis, June 26, 1784.

<sup>74</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 20. The original correspondence between Adams and the Danish Court is given in full, *ibid.*, pp. 275-277.

<sup>75</sup> Seabury, *Memoir*, p. 224.

No application was made, in any case, by Seabury to Denmark.

The second possibility of consecration for Seabury came from Bishop William Cartwright of Shrewsbury, "an irregular non-juror of the Separatist party in England."<sup>76</sup> Cartwright's consecration was considered invalid by the Church of England, as he belonged to a line of bishops who had been uncanonically consecrated, often by a single bishop.<sup>77</sup> Without any reference to the question of validity of orders, Seabury declined Cartwright's offer, on the grounds that it had reached him after his negotiations with the Scottish bishops were already under way.<sup>78</sup> In August, Seabury had written to Dr. Cooper in Edinburgh that he would hold himself "in readiness to set off for the North at twenty-four hours notice." Although without instructions from the Connecticut clergy, Seabury decided to seek consecration in Scotland, in order to "ensure to them a valid Episcopacy."

The decision was not a hasty one for Seabury, as we have seen from his letters. Nor was the decision of the Scottish bishops hasty, when they agreed to consecrate him. For two years Dr. George Berkeley, the eldest son of the distinguished bishop who had befriended the Church of England in the Colonies, had been urging Bishop John Skinner of Aberdeen to consider the plight of the American Church, seeking to maintain its existence without any bishop. In 1782, he had written that "a most important good might ere long be derived to the suffering and nearly neglected sons of the Protestant Episcopacy on the other side of the Atlantic, from the suffering Church of Scotland." It seemed to him "a time peculiarly favourable to the introduction of the Protestant episcopate on the footing of universal toleration,

<sup>76</sup> Beardsley, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

<sup>77</sup> Henry Broxap, *The Later Non-Jurors* (Cambridge, 1924), p. 278; this work also gives (*passim*) information about the complex divisions of non-jurors. For a discussion of Cartwright's orders, and the Scottish succession see W. H. Stowe, "The Scottish Succession and the validity of Bishop Seabury's Orders," *Hist. Mag.*, IX (December, 1940), pp. 322-348.

<sup>78</sup> Seabury, Letter to Cartwright, October 15, 1784.

and before any anti-episcopal establishment shall have taken place." In a later letter, he wrote that though there might be opposition in America for political reasons to a bishop consecrated by the English Church, there was less apt to be opposition to a man consecrated by a Church which had never recognized the sovereign against whom the Colonies had rebelled. Dr. Berkeley did not like the "wild prospects of independency" in the States; he explained, "I am as far removed from Erastianism and from democracy as any man ever was; I do heartily abominate both of these anti-scriptural systems." He wanted the Scottish bishops to plant the seed of the valid Episcopal Church, entirely free of all political ties. He urged them to act on the principle of universal toleration, suggesting that Philadelphia might be a good place to locate a bishop, "who had never sworn to King George," as "the Quakers are a tolerating people." The great advantage held by the Scottish Church in his opinion was its freedom from legal establishment. In still a third letter to Skinner, written March 24, 1783, he wrote:

*Provincial Assemblies* will never invite a prelate; provincial assemblies, if they establish anything, will establish some *human* device; but *provincial assemblies* will not, now or soon, think of excluding a Protestant bishop, who sues only for toleration. Popish prelates are now in North America exercising their functions over a willing people, without any aid or encouragement from provincial assemblies. . . . Episcopacy must be sent before it be asked: these are lukewarm days. Christianity waited not at the first, the Church of Rome waits not *now*, for any invitation or encouragement.

In this letter Dr. Berkeley suggested Virginia as a good residence for the first bishop.

Not until November, 1783, did Seabury's presence in London and his mission become known to Dr. Berkeley, who wrote at once to Bishop Skinner. Dr. Berkeley was a

prominent clergyman of the Church of England, so his recommendations carried weight. He wrote his friend:

I have this day heard, I need not add with the sincerest pleasure, that a respectable presbyter, well recommended from America, has arrived in London seeking what, it seems, in the present state of affairs, he cannot expect to receive from our Church.

Surely, dear Sir, the Scotch prelates, who are not shackled by any *Erastian connexion*, will not send this suppliant empty away.

He added his belief that the king, many of his counsellors, most of the bishops, and "all the learned and respectable clergy in our Church, will at least secretly rejoice, if a Protestant bishop be sent from Scotland to America; but more especially if Connecticut be the scene of his ministry." Dr. Berkeley, in his first letters, had been pressing the leaders of the Scottish Church to act in behalf of an American Episcopate as a matter of principle. Now that a recommended candidate was at hand, he asked a direct question of Bishop Robert Kilgour, Primus of Scotland: "Can consecration be obtained in Scotland for an already dignified and well-vouched American clergyman, now at London, for the purpose of perpetuating the Episcopal Reformed Church in America, particularly in Connecticut?" Correspondence followed on the personal fitness of Seabury, and on the reasons for his being refused in England. A bishop consecrated in England, Berkeley explained, might be regarded in America as an English effort to maintain supremacy, but "the Episcopal Church of Scotland cannot be suspected of aiming at supremacy of any kind, or over any people."

In reply to Berkeley's direct question, Bishop Kilgour expressed his "heartly concurrence in the proposal for intro-

ducing Protestant episcopacy into America." One of his associates wrote:

The very prospect rejoices me greatly; and considering the great depositum committed to us, I do not see how we can account to our great Lord and Master, if we neglect such an opportunity of promoting his truth, and enlarging the borders of his Church.<sup>79</sup>

Word of the willingness of the Scottish bishops to consecrate him reached Seabury when he was waiting for the final parliamentary decree in England. He did not follow up their friendly encouragement until he was convinced that he could not obtain English orders. On August 31, 1784, he wrote to Dr. Cooper, asking that the Scottish bishops be applied to on his behalf. He asked for as prompt an answer as possible, explaining that he could not afford another year away from home, and was eager to sail in the autumn before the winter storms doubled the inconvenience and danger of the trip. Of the Scottish Church he wrote:

And perhaps for this cause, among others, God's Providence has supported them, and continued their Succession under various and great Difficulties—that a free, valid and purely Ecclesiastical Episcopacy, may, from them, pass into the Western world.

This letter Dr. Cooper entrusted to the Rev. John Allan of Edinburgh, to be delivered to the Scottish bishops.

The bishops answered the Rev. John Allan on October 2, 1784, agreeing to consecrate Seabury. They set the place at Aberdeen, but left it to Seabury to say when he could arrive. They were satisfied with his explanation of the delay in England, and were willing to comply with his request,

<sup>79</sup> Fragment of a letter from one of the Scottish bishops quoted without author or date, Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 223.



though they had been disturbed by his long silence. Bishop Kilgour wrote:

Dr. Seabury's long silence after it had been signified to him, that the Bishops of this Church would comply with his Proposals, made them all think that the Affair was dropped and that he did not chuse to be connected with them.

It is not difficult to understand how the Scottish bishops had reached this faulty conclusion, when we recall the tensions that existed between the Scottish Church, of which Bishop Kilgour was Primus, and the Church of England in Scotland. The trouble stemmed from the Revolution of 1688, when the Stuarts were driven from the throne, and William of Orange was made King of England and Scotland. Many of the bishops and clergy of the Episcopal Church in Scotland refused to support the new king, retaining instead a fanatical devotion to the Stuart line. The non-juring clergy and bishops, those who refused to take an oath of allegiance to William, were deprived of their cures. Of these, a majority remained Jacobites, with the result that the Church in Scotland was disestablished; the Presbyterians received the royal patronage, and episcopacy was proscribed. The clergy who did take William's oath were protected, but closely supervised by the Presbyterian General Assembly. The political allegiance of the Episcopalians to the Stuart line was the active sort, and they played a big part in the uprisings of 1715 and 1745. In 1746 and 1748, the English Parliament passed harsh penal laws in an effort to extirpate the Scottish Episcopal Church. Public worship was no longer permitted, five non-jurors being the maximum allowed to meet together. In order to insure a loyal Episcopal Church in Scotland, clergy were brought in from England. Though both groups were in the English succession, they had grown far apart, in politics and in churchmanship. Until 1764, their liturgies had differed. The Church of England in

Scotland followed the English Prayer Book, with Cranmer's Protestant emphasis. The anti-Presbyterian non-jurors of the Scottish Episcopal Church had restored the Laudian liturgy, with its strong sacramental emphasis.<sup>80</sup> After 1764 the repressive laws, though not repealed, were not invoked, as the Scottish Episcopal Church by that time was too broken and obscure to be considered politically dangerous.

Understanding the outcast position of the non-juring bishops of the Scottish Church, Seabury had written explicitly, in the letter forwarded through Cooper and Allan, that he had no doubts as to the validity of their orders. It was only natural, he explained, for the Connecticut clergy to turn first to the English Church, with which they had always had a close connection. But, having failed there

I think myself at liberty to pursue such other Scheme as shall ensure to them a valid Episcopacy; and such I take the Scotch Episcopacy to be in every sense of the word; and such I know the Clergy of Connecticut consider it, and have always done so.<sup>81</sup>

The letter of Bishop Kilgour to the Rev. John Allan of October 2, 1784, reached Seabury promptly, as his answering communication was dated October 14. After expressing his gratitude to them "for the kind and Christian attention which they show to the destitute and suffering Church in North America in general, and that of Connecticut in particular," he stated that he would reach Aberdeen by November 10, and there await their convenience.<sup>82</sup>

On his arrival in Aberdeen, Seabury met with the first explicit objection to his consecration from America. Dr.

<sup>80</sup> M. H. Shepherd, Jr., *The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary* (New York, 1950), pp. 65-66. The English Prayer Book of 1662 was in use in America, with the communion office shaped by Cranmer. The Scottish Church used the communion office derived from Laud's Liturgy.

<sup>81</sup> Seabury, Letter to Cooper, August 31, 1784.

<sup>82</sup> Seabury, Letter to Kilgour, October 14, 1784.

William Smith had written to the Scottish bishops urging them to refuse to consecrate Seabury. Smith asserted that it was

against the earnest and sound advice of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, to whom Dr. Seabury's design was communicated; they not thinking him a fit person, especially as he was actively and deeply engaged against Congress; that he would by this forward step render Episcopacy suspect there, the people not having had time, after a total derangement of their civil affairs, to consider as yet of ecclesiastical; and if it were unexpectedly and rashly introduced among them at the instigation of a few clergy only that remain, without their being consulted, would occasion it to be entirely slighted, unless with the approbation of the State they belong to; which is what they are laboring after just now, having called several provincial meetings together this autumn, to settle some preliminary articles of a Protestant Episcopal Church, as near as may be to that of England and Scotland.

The opposition in this letter is interesting as an early indication of trouble ahead, but it had no influence on the Scottish bishops. Actually they had already written directly to the Archbishop of Canterbury asking that, if he "thought the Bishops here run any hazard in complying with Dr. Seabury's request, he would be so good as to give Dr. Berkeley notice immediately, but if his Grace was satisfied that there was no Danger, there was no occasion to give any Answer."<sup>83</sup> As no answer had come, they felt reasonably safe. Furthermore, they had checked on Seabury's personal backing in the States, not only through Dr. Berkeley, but also through Dr. Cooper, who knew personally "several worthy Clergymen in Connecticut" by whom Seabury was recommended.<sup>84</sup> The fact that no action in regard to episcopacy had yet been taken officially in the States was one of Dr. Berkeley's argu-

<sup>83</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 230.

<sup>84</sup> Cooper, Letter to Kilgour, September 13, 1784.

ments for acting at once. Dr. Smith's reference to the provincial assemblies through which the reorganization of the Church was being planned, must have brought a reaction from the bishops in Seabury's favor, for to them as to the Boston clergy, this would be "beginning at the wrong end."<sup>85</sup>

On November 13, 1784, the final preliminaries were completed. Three of the Scottish bishops convened at Aberdeen: the Right Rev. Robert Kilgour, Bishop of Aberdeen and Primus of Scotland; the Right Rev. John Skinner, his co-adjutor; and the Right Rev. Arthur Petrie, Bishop of Ross and Moray. The Bishop of Dunblane, though absent, had signified his assent to the consecration. Dr. Seabury presented his credentials, which were carefully noted and recorded in the minute book of the College of Bishops in Scotland.<sup>86</sup> These consisted of the letters from the clergy of both Connecticut and New York, the testimonials to Seabury's personal fitness, the letter from Mr. Jarvis assuring Seabury of the state's willingness to permit the coming of a bishop, and also a copy of the Act of the Assembly guaranteeing religious freedom in Connecticut. The bishops read and considered his papers, and then conversed at length with Dr. Seabury. Then, being "fully satisfied of his fitness to be promoted to the Episcopate," they set the following day, November 14, 1784, after morning prayers and a suitable sermon, as the time for the consecration. This meeting to complete arrangements must have been most satisfactory to Seabury and to the Scottish bishops as their Churches had much in common. Dr. McConnell has pointed out their similarities thus:

Both Churches had, through their political situation, been driven to emphasize strongly the divine side of Episcopacy.

<sup>85</sup> Boston Convention, Letter to the Pennsylvania committee, September 8, 1784.

<sup>86</sup> Minute Book of the College of Bishops of Scotland, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 234-239.

They both had their homes in the midst of a hostile Presbyterian community. They had each been trained to recognize a king who was hateful to their fellow-citizens. The people in both cases had learned to live their religious lives apart from the people among whom they dwelt. They were not readily touched by the spirit of their time and place.<sup>87</sup>

The consecration took place as planned, Sunday, November 14, 1784, following a public service of worship. Regular church services were held in the upper rooms of the home of Bishop Skinner which had been built for that purpose. In the year 1776, before he had been consecrated bishop, the Rev. John Skinner had needed larger accommodations for his growing congregation, of which we have the following account:

But in 1776, even the idea of erecting an ostensible church-like place of worship dared not be cherished by Scotch Episcopalians. Hence was Mr. Skinner obliged to look out for some retired situation, down a close, or little alley, and there, at his own individual expense, to erect a large dwelling-house; the two upper floors of which, being fitted up as a chapel, were devoted to the accommodation of his daily increasing flock, and the two under floors to the residence of his family.<sup>88</sup>

It was there, in Bishop Skinner's chapel in Aberdeen, that Samuel Seabury was "duly consecrated with all becoming solemnity by the said Right Rev. Mr. Robert Kilgour, Mr. Arthur Petrie, and Mr. John Skinner, in the presence of a considerable number of respectable clergymen and a great number of laity, on which occasion all testified great satisfaction." <sup>89</sup> The sermon preached for the occasion by Bishop Skinner was later published anonymously and widely circulated in England and Scotland. It was well received and

<sup>87</sup> McConnell, *History of the American Episcopal Church*, p. 234.

<sup>88</sup> Beardsley, *Seabury*, p. 144.

<sup>89</sup> Minute Book of the College of Bishops in Scotland, Perry, *op. cit.*

was said to have helped in improving the relations between the Churches in those two countries.

On Monday, November 15, 1784, the newly consecrated Bishop of Connecticut met with the Scottish bishops, and a concordat between the two Churches "was formed and agreed upon . . . to their mutual satisfaction; and two duplicates thereof, wrote upon vellum, were duly signed and sealed by all four." One copy was retained by the Scottish bishops; the other was given to Bishop Seabury, with an accompanying letter to the clergy of Connecticut. In the letter, the Scottish bishops informed the clergy officially of the consecration and of the concordat. Before promoting Seabury to the episcopate, the bishops wrote they had made sure that what was wanted was "the blessings of a free, valid and purely ecclesiastical Episcopacy," and that the Connecticut Church so regarded the Scottish Episcopate. They had also ascertained that Seabury was well recommended and fit for the office, and that the Connecticut clergy were willing to acknowledge and submit to him as their bishop, once he was "properly authorised to take charge of you in that character." Now that he had been consecrated, "We hope you will receive and acknowledge the Right Reverend Bishop Seabury as your Bishop and spiritual governor, that you will pay him all due and canonical obedience in that sacred character." Their intention, they continued, had been to follow the example of "the Primitive Church while in a similar situation, unconnected with, and unsupported by, the temporal powers." The concordat had been drawn up "according to this standard of primitive practice . . . to serve as a bond of union between the Catholic remainder of the ancient Church of Scotland, and the new rising Church in the United States of America."

The concordat contained seven articles on which the four bishops agreed.<sup>90</sup> In the first article they expressed their

<sup>90</sup> Concordat of November 15, 1784, *ibid.*, pp. 236-237.

acceptance of "the whole doctrine of the Gospel as revealed and set forth in the Holy Scriptures" and their desire "to maintain the analogy of the common faith once delivered to the saints, and happily preserved in the Church of Christ."

In the second article, their rejection of state control of the Church was stated explicitly. They agreed

in believing this Church to be the mystical body of Christ, and of which He alone is the head and supreme governor, and that under Him the chief ministers or managers of the affairs of this spiritual society are those called Bishops, whose exercise of their sacred office being independent of all lay powers, it follows, of consequence, that their spiritual authority and jurisdiction cannot be affected by any lay deprivation.

Thus, the validity of the Scottish orders and the American principle of the separation of Church and state were both established in one statement.

In the third article the principle of national autonomy was involved. The two Churches were to be in full communion, and it was agreed that the Americans, when in Scotland, would not hold communion "with those persons who, under the pretence of ordination by an English or Irish bishop . . . officiate as clergymen in any part of the National Church of Scotland, and whom the Scottish Bishops cannot help looking upon as schismatical intruders."

Articles four and five concerned the liturgy. It was agreed, in article four, that the two Churches desired "as near a conformity in worship and discipline established as is consistent with the different circumstances and customs of nations." In order to avoid political difficulty, they resolved "to observe such prudent generality in their public prayers with respect to these points as shall appear most agreeable to Apostolic rules, and the practice of the Primitive Church." The fifth article is probably the best known, as it contained Seabury's agreement to attempt to introduce into the Amer-

ican Prayer Book the communion office used by the Church of Scotland.<sup>91</sup> Their emphasis on sacramental worship is evident from the beginning of article five:

As the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, or the administration of the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ is the principal bond of union among Christians, as well as the most solemn act of worship in the Christian Church, the Bishops aforesaid agree in desiring that there may be as little variance here as possible.

Bishop Seabury was therefore urged to

endeavour all he can, consistently with peace and prudence, to make the celebration of this venerable mystery conformable to the most primitive doctrine and practice in that respect, which is the pattern the Church of Scotland has copied after in her Communion office.

Bishop Seabury agreed

to take a serious view of the Communion office recommended by them, and if found agreeable to the genuine standards of antiquity, to give his sanction to it, and by the gentle methods of argument and persuasion, to endeavour, as they have done, to introduce it by degrees into practice, without the compulsion of authority on the one side, or prejudice of former custom on the other.

The last two articles merely serve to conclude the concordat. In article six, the bishops agreed to maintain correspondence between the two Churches in order to maintain "brotherly fellowship." The last article emphasized the purity and uprightness of their intentions, "that in the whole of this transaction they have nothing else in view but the glory

<sup>91</sup> The English Prayer Book of 1662 was in use in America, with the communion office shaped by Cranmer. The Scottish Church used the communion office derived from Laud's Liturgy.



of God, and the good of His Church," and they hoped they had offended no one.

The apologetic note on which the concordat ended showed a foreboding of unfavorable criticism to come. Nor was it long in coming. On November 19, 1784, a letter went from Granville Sharp, Esq. to the Archbishop of Canterbury, bristling with antagonism to Scottish Episcopacy.<sup>92</sup> He wrote the archbishop that he greatly regretted the limitations of the act of Parliament that prevented the consecration of bishops for America. His reason for writing was that he had learned with dismay that an American clergyman

is actually gone down to Scotland, with a view of obtaining consecration from some of the remaining NON-JURING Bishops in that kingdom, who still affect among themselves a nominal jurisdiction from the Pretender's appointment; and he proposes, afterwards, to go to America, in hopes of obtaining jurisdiction over several EPISCOPAL CONGREGATIONS in Connecticut.

Even Dr. Berkeley was critical, though his opposition was not to the Scottish Episcopate. He was troubled for fear the documents signed might occasion disunity. The parts to which he objected were probably the articles in which Seabury agreed to support the form of communion office used by the Scottish Church.

Not all the correspondence produced by the consecration was unfavorable, however. On December 1, 1784, the Rev. Jacob Duché wrote to Dr. White in Philadelphia that Sea-

<sup>92</sup> Sharp, who was a grandson of an Archbishop of York, had been in correspondence with the Archbishop of Canterbury, trying to secure consecration for the American bishops in the English succession. At the time of the General Convention in New York, October, 1784, which it was believed in England to be for the election of bishops, the archbishop had authorized Sharp "to assure the Americans, that if they elected unexceptionable persons, and transmitted proper certificates of their morals and conduct, and of their suitable abilities for so important a charge, he would do every thing in his power to promote their good intentions." (Perry, *Hist. Coll.*, II, 218.)

bury had been consecrated in Aberdeen, by three non-juring bishops, "not having had it in his Power to obtain a Consecration here." He stated explicitly "that the Succession of those Bishops is indisputable, of which he brings ample Testimonies." Apparently Duché was worried about the kind of reception Seabury would be given on his return to the States, for he wrote at great length on the subject. He wrote:

It is the sincere Wish of those who wish well to the Interest of ye American Episcopal Church formed on the Model of our Church of England, that all ye Episcopal Clergy would receive him with open Arms, and thus at once effectually prevent the growth of Sectaries, from a Division that must necessarily ensue if this Providential Offer is not immediately accepted. Dr. Inglis . . . heartily joins me in recommending it warmly to you to give a proper, affectionate, and (I must say) filial reception to good Bishop Seabury, who goes over to you in a character truly primitive, unincumbered with any temporal *Title*, or Honours or Interests, and perfectly disposed to yield Allegiance to ye Civil Powers in your States.

There follows a short eulogy of Seabury personally, and then some further advice to the writer's ex-assistant:

I hope you will take ye earliest Opportunity of calling together a Convention, or Synod, or Convocation, or some General Ecclesiastical Meeting from the several States, to receive him, and at ye same time, to fix upon an Ecclesiastical Constitution for your future Union and Comfort.

Just two days later, on December 3, 1784, in a letter to his old friend, the Rev. Jonathan Boucher, Seabury revealed his eagerness to avoid any break with the English Church. On his way back to London, he had stopped off in Edinburgh to see Dr. Cooper, and the letter was written from there. Assum-

ing that Boucher had already been told about the consecration, Seabury plunged into the matter of the liturgy, which threatened to become an issue. He explained that it had been agreed in the concordat that the clergy of Connecticut were to form their own liturgy and offices. Nevertheless, the Scottish bishops "hope the English Liturgy, which is the one they use, will be retained, except the Communion Office, and that they wish should give place to the one in Edward the Sixth's Prayer Book." Having pointed out the English sources of the forms recommended, Seabury called attention to the fact that a difference in form need not result in a break between the English and Connecticut Churches: "Some of the congregations in Scotland use one and some the other Office; but they communicate with each other on every occasion that offers." He himself saw no reason for a break; he wrote: "Upon the whole, I know nothing, and am conscious that I have done nothing that ought to interrupt my connection with the Church of England." Political reasons having prevented him from obtaining an episcopacy for the Connecticut Church in England, "it was natural in the next instance to apply to Scotland, whose Episcopacy, though now under a cloud, is the very same, in every ecclesiastical sense, with the English." His desire to remain close to the English Church was explicitly stated, as the letter continued:

My own inclination is to cultivate as close a connection and union with the Church of England, as that Church and the political state of the two countries shall permit. I have grown up and lived hitherto under the influence of the highest veneration for and attachment to the Church of England, and in the service of the Society, and my hope is to promote the interest of that Church with greater effect than ever, and to establish it in the full enjoyment of its whole government and discipline.

Seabury wanted help from Boucher in the matter of his continuing as a missionary for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel on his return to the States. He was frank to admit that he needed the small salary the society paid, but he insisted that there was a larger issue too: the maintaining of a friendly connection in religious matters between the two countries. He wrote:

I trust, sir, that it is not the loss of £50 per annum that I dread—though that is an object of some importance to a man who has nothing—but the consequences that must ensue, the total alienation of regard and affection.

The year 1784 ended, as 1783 had, on a note of uncertainty for the supporters of the ecclesiastical plan of reorganization. Word of Seabury's consecration was slow to reach the American clergy. In November, 1784, Parker expressed his uneasiness to Daniel Fogg. Everyone at the New York Convention had spoken of Dr. Seabury's consecration as certain, Parker wrote, but he had searched the English papers and letters in vain for any mention of a consecration in England. On December 21, 1784, the Rev. Benjamin Moore of New York wrote to Parker in Boston:

Our Church affairs remain as they were. The Prospect of an American Episcopate seems to be as uncertain as ever. A letter from Dr. Seabury to a Gentleman in this City has this Expression. "I have been amused, I think deceived." I am informed, however, that the Clergy of Maryland, in a late Convention, have fixed upon Dr. Smith as a Candidate for Episcopal Orders, and that he is to embark for England next April. But if the Gentleman who is there at present cannot succeed, I should suppose, it will preclude every other attempt.

The probability of failure to procure the consecration of an American bishop prepared Moore to do what he could with the Convention to be held the following year in Philadelphia. His letter continued:

Shall we have the pleasure of seeing you at Philadelphia, at the General Assembly of all the Churches? I hope so—that Phrase GENERAL ASSEMBLY I am not very fond of—it escaped me by chance. We will try to give it a better Character.<sup>93</sup>

Actually, of course, Seabury had been consecrated more than a month before Moore's letter was written. The first and most important step in the ecclesiastical plan had been achieved. Yet the future was far from clear. Seabury's reception in the United States was uncertain. He had no diocese and no funds. Furthermore, he was antagonistic to the action taken by the Episcopal churches in his absence. In a letter to Bishop Skinner, written December 27, 1784, in commenting on the General Convention in New York, he stated:

I cannot but consider this as a very lame, if not a mischievous business. It will bring the Clergy into abject bondage to the Laity & a Bp. it seems is to have no more power in the Convention than a Lay member. Doctrines, Disciplines, Liturgies, are all under lay control. I have always feared . . . the lax principles of the Southern Clergy.

Even his relation with the Church of England, which he loved, was in doubt. The act of consecration, which he had sought in order to further the Church's work, threatened to be the cause of his alienation from her. Would he be permitted to retain a friendly connection, or had he, unwillingly, created a schism? The future must have seemed insecure and foreboding to Bishop Seabury, as he wound up his business in England and completed his arrangements for his return to America.

<sup>93</sup> Six weeks later, Moore wrote to inform Parker of Seabury's consecration. (Moore, Letter to Parker, February 14, 1785.)

*The Church Divided Against Itself (1785)*

AT THE end of 1784, both plans for the reorganization of the Episcopal Church in America were well launched. Those who favored the federal plan had held a well attended meeting, which had arranged for an official General Convention in 1785, with duly elected delegates empowered to draw up a constitution for the Church. Those who supported the ecclesiastical plan had a duly consecrated bishop, the Rt. Rev. Samuel Seabury, Bishop of Connecticut. In 1785, the two plans met in direct conflict, though not until after Seabury's return to America, the latter part of June. The first half of 1785 was relatively uneventful for both groups.

Almost four of the first six months of 1785 were spent by Bishop Seabury on his long voyage home from England. During January and February, he was in London, waiting for a passage home. On January 5, 1785, he wrote his first letter as bishop to the Connecticut clergy. It was a strong letter, and yet it revealed, from beginning to end, his uncertainty as to his reception, even by those who had elected him. Though pastoral in content, the letter was addressed to three of his most trustworthy friends—the Rev. Messrs. Leaming, Jarvis, and Hubbard. Bishop Seabury began with the simple statement: "It is with great pleasure that I now inform you, that my business here is perfectly completed, in the best way that I have been able to transact it." He thanked them for their helpful letters, and then recounted the kind reception

he had received in Scotland. The Scottish bishops, he wrote, were concerned "without regard to any human policy, to impart a pure, valid and free Episcopacy to the western world." They hoped that the Connecticut Church might be a pattern for the rest of the world, for

as it was freed from all incumbrance arising from connection with civil establishments and human policy, the future splendor of its primitive simplicity and Christian piety would appear to be eminently and entirely the work of God and not of man.

Seabury explained that his return had been delayed, as no ship was sailing before the first of March, but he hoped to be in New York by April. The reference to his return led to a direct consideration of the problems that would then confront him. First, he emphasized that he must have their support:

A new scene will now, my dear Gentlemen, in all probability open in America. Much do I depend on you and the other good Clergymen in Connecticut, for advice and support, in an office which will otherwise prove too heavy for me.

He asked their advice as to whether he should live in New London, where he felt sure the church would accept him as rector, paying him a salary, which he needed. If so, he would need an assistant, and he asked them to find him a "good, clever young gentleman who will go immediately into deacon's orders." He continued: "Indeed I must think it a matter of propriety, that as many worthy candidates be in readiness for orders as can be procured. Make the way, I beseech you, as plain and easy for me as you can." Through this request, Seabury was establishing their acceptance of the validity of his consecration. He told them frankly of the displeasure of the English archbishops, but repeated that he had done what had seemed best. The letter closed humbly:

This, I believe, is the last time I shall write to you from this country. Will you then accept your Bishop's blessing, and hearty prayers for your happiness in this world and the next? May God bless also, and keep, all the good Clergy of Connecticut.

While still in London, Bishop Seabury received a letter from Bishop John Skinner of Aberdeen, which further emphasized the problems ahead. Bishop Skinner mentioned having seen in the London papers accounts of the General Convention held in New York, and the resolutions passed "exactly as you transcribed them." He was most sympathetic towards Seabury, writing:

I see the difficulties you will have to struggle with from the loose incoherent notions of Church government which seem to prevail too much, even among those of the Episcopal persuasion in some of the Southern States; but the better principles and dutiful support of your own Clergy will enable you to face the Opposition with becoming fortitude and prudence. And may the great and only Head of his Church strengthen you for the great work to which he has appointed you, and make you the instrument of frustrating the mischievous Devices of the late Convention.

Skinner added a further denunciation of the Convention:

whatever views they may have had of the future Establishment of Episcopacy in America, I think they could not have contrived more effectually for suppressing the influence and smothering all the benefits of it, than by entering into such Articles of Union, as are directly repugnant to its spirit and subversive of its original Design.

In February, 1785, Seabury made two attempts to establish friendly relations with the English Church. First, he called on the two archbishops. Of this visit he wrote:



My business in Scotland was completed on the 14th of Nov. In December I returned to London, and had no intercourse with the great men of the Church till the last of February when I went to take leave of the two Archbishops. They received me with the greatest politeness, and parted with me in the most friendly and affectionate manner. So that I hope I shall be able to keep up a proper intercourse with them.<sup>1</sup>

His second approach was to the S.P.G. On February 27, 1785, he wrote a carefully composed letter, in which he tried to persuade the society to continue its support of him.<sup>2</sup> He explained the circumstances that had led to his securing Scottish orders, and expressed his sincere desire for the union of the American and English Churches. Emphasizing that he had "entered into no political engagements in Scotland," Seabury stated his position:

And I shall return to America, bound indeed to hold communion with the Episcopal Church of Scotland, because I believe that, as I do the Church of England, to be the Church of Christ.

It is the first wish of my heart, and will be the endeavor of my life to maintain this unity with the Church of England, agreeably to those general laws of Christ's Church, which depend not on any human power, and which lay the strongest obligations on all its members to live in peace and unity with each other.

The new American bishop wrote frankly of the needs of his Church. He hoped that the small salary, which he had received as a missionary of the society for thirty-one years, would be continued. Church properties, such as some lands in Vermont, to which the society had the only legal claim,

<sup>1</sup> Seabury, Letter to Dr. Sylvester Gardiner, March 15, 1785. (Seabury, *Memoir*, p. 255.)

<sup>2</sup> Two preliminary drafts are quoted from the Bishop's manuscripts by his grandson. (Seabury, *Memoir*, pp. 271-278.)

he believed should be promptly turned over to the American Church, lest they be confiscated by the civil government. For his clergy, he coveted a library of books belonging to the society, which was in New York, where only one of their missionaries remained. In closing, Seabury returned to his main emphasis: the desire to continue friendly relations. Whatever the society determined to do in regard to him personally, he believed it would be to the advantage of the society and of the American Church to correspond, for

their interests are indeed the same, and I trust that the Society will do me the justice to believe, that with such ability as I have and such influence as my station may give me, I shall steadily endeavor to promote the interests of both.<sup>3</sup>

Seabury had done all that he could in England. In March, 1785, he sailed for home.

Bishop Seabury arrived at Newport, Rhode Island, on June 20, reached New London, Connecticut, on June 27, and, on June 29, officially notified the Rev. Abraham Jarvis, secretary of the Connecticut clergy, of his arrival and of his desire to meet with the clergy as soon as possible. The meeting was arranged for August 2, 1785. On July 14, an invitation was sent to Dr. White, and through him to the other Pennsylvania clergymen, to join with the Connecticut clergy in their first meeting with their new bishop, in the interest of "a Christian Union of all the Churches in the thirteen States." The invitation continued:

We have no Views of usurping any Authority over our Brothers and Neighbours, but wish them to unite with us, in the same friendly manner, that we are ready and willing to do, with them. I must earnestly entreat you to come upon this

<sup>3</sup>In the spring, after his return to Connecticut, Seabury received an abrupt, negative answer to this letter, which pointedly ignored his consecration. (Beardsley, *Seabury*, p. 176) Later, the society did turn the lands in Vermont over to the American Church through Parker.

occasion, for the sake of the peace of the Church—for your own satisfaction, in what friendly manner the Clergy here would treat you—not to mention what happiness the sight of you would give to your sincere friend and brother,

Jeremiah Leaming.

Dr. White declined. In his *Memoirs*, he gave the following account of his reply:

Philadelphia thanked them for the invitation; congratulated Bishop Seabury on his arrival; apologized for the not coming, by the expectation of the convention in September; and invited the clergy of Connecticut to attend the latter.<sup>4</sup>

The real issue between Bishop Seabury and Dr. White was, of course, their basic disagreement as to the proper procedure for the reorganization of the Church. Otherwise, both men might have attended both meetings, for the one in Connecticut was held nearly two months before the one in Philadelphia. Before considering these meetings in detail, it is necessary to note briefly the affairs of the Church which were occupying Dr. White, while Bishop Seabury was returning from England to Connecticut.

The problem of what constituted a valid episcopacy concerned White during the early months of 1785. A letter from the Rev. Jacob Duché raised two different considerations.<sup>5</sup> In the first place, Duché wrote frankly of the criticism felt in England of the lack of appreciation of the Episcopal office, shown in the recent church Convention in New York. The conclusions of the meeting, according to Duché, were “quite inconsistent with the Discipline of the Church of England,” and “inconsistent with that Form of Ecclesiastical Discipline, which prevailed in the purest period of the Xtian Church,”

<sup>4</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 100.

<sup>5</sup> Duché, Letter to White, February 10, 1785.

as "they seem to be wholly formed upon ye Presbyterian Model." He continued:

Judge then with what Astonishment every true Episcopalian must view your Treatment of the Episcopal Order, by declaring, as you have done, that they shall have no Distinction at your Conventions, but only be considered as Members, *ex-officio*. I consider this as fundamentally wrong. An Episcopalian Clergyman cannot confound the Orders of Bishop and Priest, and withhold Assent from due Subordination.

In the second place, Duché reiterated his conviction of the indisputable validity of Bishop Seabury's consecration.<sup>6</sup> He described Seabury as "a truly primitive Bishop, consecrated by three Bishops in Scotland, where the Apostolic Succession has been inviolably preserved, as appears from the Register he takes with him." Though Seabury's consecration could not be approved in England, because of the connection there between the Church and state, his freedom from state support would be an advantage in America. Duché pointed out:

He has taken no Oath of any kind to any Power on Earth, and therefore comes to you in "unquestionable Form"; just such a Bishop as you would have wished, and such as you could by no other means have obtained.

The letter closed with a guarded recognition of the danger of there being two Church of England churches established in the States, and with a firm insistence that union depended on a duly consecrated episcopate. Duché concluded:

Receive him, therefore, I beseech you, with Cordial affection, and with that Xtian Respect, which is due to his high and sacred office. Suffer no Schism in ye Church. Providence has sent him to accomplish and preserve a compleat Union in your

<sup>6</sup>For his earlier statement, cf. Duché, Letter to White, December 1, 1784.

new American Church. . . . God grant that you may all be kept in ye Unity of the Spirit and ye Bond of Peace.

About the same time that Duché wrote of the unquestionable validity of the Scottish succession, Granville Sharp wrote to America to discredit it. His letters were addressed to Benjamin Franklin and to the Rev. James Manning, a Baptist minister, president of the College of Providence, in Rhode Island. Copies were given to the Rev. Samuel Provoost, rector of Trinity Church, New York, whose opposition to Seabury, politically and personally, had begun during the Revolutionary War.<sup>7</sup> As planned, these were "privately circulated during the convention of 1785,"<sup>8</sup> with the result that the English objections to the Scottish Episcopate, as seen by Sharp, were widely known in the American Church. His letters influenced the American clergy, because he included information handed down from his distinguished grandfather, the Rt. Rev. John Sharp, Archbishop of York. The basis for the opposition to Scottish orders, Granville Sharp explained as follows:

The original Nonjuring Bishops, who were actually ejected from their Sees in England for refusing to take the oaths to King William and Queen Mary, after the revolution, had certainly a right to ordain or consecrate such proper persons as were legally appointed to an Episcopal charge, they themselves having been duly consecrated by "the laying on of hands" in a succession of Authority that is unquestionable; but it seems very doubtful how a succession of their authority could be continued for a number of years after their death, amongst persons who have no real Congregation or Charge, but only a nominal or mere titular appointment over an invisible Church, and that granted by the pretender; a foreign Prince, who has no authority whatsoever in these Kingdoms. This must be the

<sup>7</sup> Perry, *Hist. Notes*, p. 272.

<sup>8</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 122.

case, I fear, with the present Scotch Bishops if they are really what they are called, only the successors of the Nonjuring Bishops.<sup>9</sup>

That the Scottish bishops had maintained the succession from apostolic times was not questioned. The validity of the Scottish orders was repudiated, because, in England, each bishop was consecrated for a definite see to which he had been appointed by the accepted ruler of the state. Under the Hanoverian kings, the Church of the non-juring bishops was legally non-existent.

On April 6, 1785, White received a further stimulus in the task of formulating his own opinion of what constituted a valid episcopacy. The entire correspondence between John Adams, the American ambassador in London, and the Danish bishops, on the possibility of a Danish ordination of American candidates for the ministry, was sent him. White replied at once that the British government had passed an act enabling the English bishops to ordain American candidates, adding:

But, sir, it would be an injustice to the Episcopal Church, were I to neglect to inform the honourable board, that I take it to be a general sentiment, not to depend on any foreign authority for the ordination of ministers, or for any other matter appertaining to religion.<sup>10</sup>

From the point of view of those who believed in the federal plan of reorganization, the main task of the first months of 1785 was to hold preliminary meetings in each state, in preparation for the coming General Assembly. The New York Convention of 1784 had lacked authority to act for the Church as a whole, because only a few of those

<sup>9</sup> Seabury, *Memoir*, pp. 238-240.

<sup>10</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 277. The entire correspondence is given as Appendix I, pp. 275-277.

present had been duly elected representatives. State conventions of the Episcopal churches were necessary for the two-fold purpose of organizing on a state basis, and of electing delegates to the General Convention of the Church to be held in Philadelphia in the fall.<sup>11</sup>

One of the first and most thorough of such meetings was held by the churches of Virginia, in Richmond, May 18-25, 1785.<sup>12</sup> It was attended by thirty-six clergymen and seventy-one laymen. The Rev. James Madison, president of William and Mary College, was elected to preside, with the Rev. Robert Andrews serving as secretary. The Act of Assembly, recently passed by the Virginia legislature, giving the Episcopal Church the right to organize in the state, was read, and also the resolutions agreed on by the General Convention in New York the preceding year. Because of the depressed state of the churches in Virginia, it was resolved to dissolve the convention into a committee of the whole, for the discussion of ways of gaining unity and support. Mr. Carter Braxton was elected chairman of the convention meeting as a committee. Having a layman preside over a church convention was unprecedented, and later was severely criticized by some of the northern churchmen.<sup>13</sup>

One of the main concerns of the Virginia convention was the explicit instruction of their deputies to the coming General Convention in Philadelphia. First, it was resolved that nothing agreed on there was to be considered binding in Virginia, until ratified by the state convention. The idea of a general ecclesiastical constitution was approved, and

<sup>11</sup> A brief calendar of the conventions, leading to the making of the constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church of America is given in the *Hist. Mag.*, VI (March, 1937), 86-95.

<sup>12</sup> F. L. Hawks, *A Narrative of Events Connected with the Rise and Progress of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (New York, 1836). The minutes of the convention are given in full in the appendix, pp. 3-11. Hereinafter referred to as Hawks, *Virginia*. For the facts that follow, see especially pp. 6-11.

<sup>13</sup> Chandler, Letter to White, September 2, 1785.

most of the fundamental principles set forth by the New York meeting. The distrustful Virginia churchmen were unwilling "to bind themselves" on the fourth article: the question of the bishop being a member *ex officio* of the Convention. Article six, suggesting that the lay and clerical deputies deliberate as one body, but vote separately, was tentatively accepted. In principle, the Virginians preferred to have all the deputies vote in one body, as the lay delegates could then out-vote the clerical. Formal instructions were drawn up for the Virginia delegates, in regard to doctrine and worship. In order to achieve uniformity, which would "contribute to the prosperity of the Protestant Episcopal Church," the convention recommended acting with "liberality and moderation," as "the obstacles which stand in the way of union amongst Christian societies are too often founded on matters of mere form." Of the creeds, the Virginians wished to retain only the Apostles' Creed, for "from the holy scriptures themselves, rather than the comments of men, must we learn salvation." In the liturgy, they recommended that any change "be made with caution; And in that case let the alterations be few, and the stile of prayer continue as agreeable as may be to the essential characteristics of our persuasion." As to any change in the ceremonies

we will not now decide what ceremonies ought to be retained. We wish, however, that those, which exist, may be estimated according to their utility; and such as may appear fit to be laid aside, may no longer be appendages of our church.

The instructions having been agreed upon, four men were elected to serve as delegates to the Philadelphia convention: the Rev. Messrs. David Griffith and Samuel M. Croskey, and two laymen, John Page and William Lee.

At the same time that the matter of representation at the General Convention (including the problem of how to finance their delegates) was under discussion, Rules for the



Order, Government, and Discipline of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia were drawn up and accepted. It was first resolved that "until farther order of the Convention, the liturgy of the Church of England be used in the several churches throughout this Commonwealth, with such alterations as the American Revolution has rendered necessary." Annual Conventions were agreed on, to be presided over by a bishop, when a properly consecrated one should be settled in Virginia.

In the meantime a president was to be appointed by the Convention from its members. The conception of a bishop held by the Virginia group was clearly revealed in the canons enacted to replace the English ones, no longer considered relevant. To officiate as bishop, a man had to be nominated by the state church convention, duly consecrated to his office, and then "take the oath of allegiance to this commonwealth, and subscribe to conform to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Virginia." The bishop was to do the duty of a parish priest, except when employed in the discharge of his episcopal office: ordaining, confirming, superintending clergy conduct, or presiding in an ecclesiastical meeting. On complaint of at least three parishes, the bishop could be brought to trial, the state church convention serving as a court "from which there shall be no appeal." The offenses for which a bishop could be tried were "disorderly, scandalous, and immoral conduct, neglect of duty, a disregard to the rules and canons of the church or taking a bribe to grant either ordination or a recommendation for a vacant parish," for any of which he may be "reproved, suspended, or dismissed at the discretion of the court." Action on the organization of the Episcopal Church within the state was concluded by the passing of resolutions setting up a standing committee, who were to serve as a committee of correspondence with the Church in other states, and who were also to determine how to

obtain the consecration and future support for a bishop for Virginia.

The preliminary organizational meeting for Pennsylvania was inaugurated by the vestry of the Philadelphia churches, at Dr. White's home, on February 7, 1785.<sup>14</sup> A resolution was passed to send the account of the proceedings of the New York Convention of 1784 to every clergyman and every congregation in the state, with an announcement of the time and place for their state organizational meeting. As a result, when a meeting of the deputies from the Episcopal churches in Pennsylvania was held on May 24, 1785, in Philadelphia, it was attended by five clergy and eleven laymen, representing seven congregations. Dr. White was elected to preside. *An Act of Association*, prepared in advance by a committee chaired by Dr. White, was adopted and signed by the convention.<sup>15</sup> In these articles of association, it was agreed to adopt the name "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Pennsylvania." It was also agreed that a state convention was to be held every year at an appointed time and place. To this annual convention were to come the clergy, and at least one lay deputy, from each congregation in the state. Clergy and laity were to deliberate together, but vote separately. Nothing could be passed without the concurrence of both orders. Thus, the Pennsylvanians emphasized their support of the voting procedure, which had been recommended by the New York Convention, and later questioned by the Virginians, by incorporating it in their state organization. Any action of the state convention was binding on all the churches in the state of Pennsylvania, "provided always, That the same shall be consistent with the fundamental Principles agreed on at the two aforesaid Meetings in *Philadelphia* and *New-York*." Following the acceptance of the

<sup>14</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>15</sup> *An Act of Association of the Clergy and Congregations of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Pennsylvania*. Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-43. Note especially p. 41.

Act of Association, five clergymen and seventeen laymen were chosen as delegates for the coming General Convention. The date of the next state convention was set for May 22, 1786.

The meeting for the state of New York was held in New York City on June 22, 1785.<sup>16</sup> There were five clergymen and eleven lay deputies present. The Rev. Samuel Provoost was chosen president, and the Rev. Benjamin Moore, secretary. It was resolved that three clerical and three lay delegates be elected to represent the Episcopal Church in New York at the General Convention, "and that any one or more of each order form a quorum." The Rev. Messrs. Provoost, Beach, and Moore, and three laymen, were duly elected and authorized to act for the New York churches in the coming convention, "so far as they conform to the general principles which are established to regulate their conduct in this matter." No regular plan was proposed for future state meetings. Instead, it was resolved "that the president be requested to call another convention, at such time and place as he shall deem most conducive to the interest of the church." A bishop's authority to call meetings was thus relegated to the president in New York. In Pennsylvania, the law controlled the president.

The meeting for the state of New Jersey was held on July 6, 1785, at New Brunswick.<sup>17</sup> There were present three clergymen and fourteen laymen, representing eight parishes. The first day of the convention "prayers were read, and the Rev. Mr. Rowland delivered a sermon," after which the meeting was adjourned. On the second day, the Rev. Abraham Beach was chosen president, and the Rev. Uzal Ogden, secretary. The deputies present were then asked to produce the testi-

<sup>16</sup> *Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New York* (New York, 1787), pp. 3-4.

<sup>17</sup> *Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New Jersey; Including the three first meetings* (Trenton, 1787). Note especially pp. 3-5.

monials of their appointments, which were read and approved. Four clerical and six lay delegates were elected

with power to accede, on the part of this convention to the fundamental principles published by the convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, held in New-York, the 6th and 7th days of October, 1784; and to adopt such measures, as the said general convention may deem necessary for the utility of the said church, not repugnant to the aforesaid fundamental principles.

The arrangement for the next meeting in New Jersey was a mixture of the Pennsylvania and the New York plans. A meeting was set for the last Wednesday in May, 1786, to be held at Burlington, "unless a previous meeting becomes necessary, in which case the president may convene it, on some Tuesday previous thereto, at Perth Amboy." It was not stated who was to determine the necessity of the meeting. Vestries were urged to appoint deputies to the next state convention, "in order to promote the general interest of this church." No further action was taken towards creating a state organization.

Early in 1785, an attempt was made to arrange for a state convention of the Episcopal churches in South Carolina, which had not been represented at the General Convention in New York.<sup>18</sup> On February 8, 1785, the vestries of the two Charleston churches met to read a letter from Dr. William Smith, enclosing the recommendations of the New York meeting.<sup>19</sup> As a result, a state convention was planned for May 12, 1785, in the State House in Charleston, but so few dele-

<sup>18</sup> South Carolina was controlled by the British until 1782. After the evacuation, the Church of England made a slow recovery. For example, cf. the experience of the Rev. Robert Smith. [F. Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston, 1820), p. 216.]

<sup>19</sup> *Journals of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of South Carolina*, *ibid.*, Appendix II, pp. 463-573. The May meeting is listed as the first diocesan convention. [A. S. Thomas, "A Sketch of the History of the Church in South Carolina," *Hist. Mag.* IV (March, 1935), pp. 1-12.]

gates appeared that the meeting was postponed to July 12th. In July, the meeting was held, though there was no increase in the attendance. Three clergymen—the Rev. Messrs. Robert Smith, Henry Purcell, and Edward Ellington—and nine laymen, representing eight parishes, were present. As in Virginia, all precedent was broken by the election of a layman, Hugh Rutledge, Esq., deputy from St. Philip's Church, Charleston, as chairman. Five deputies were chosen to go to Philadelphia, at least one of whom was to be a clergyman, for whose expenses £80 was set aside.<sup>20</sup> No action was taken towards creating a state organization. Some insight into the atmosphere of the meeting is given by Dr. White, from his personal knowledge. Opposition to the principle of episcopacy was strong in South Carolina, where it was associated with the British government, whose army had all too recently overrun the state. There was a real danger that the invitation to join with the Episcopal churches in the other states might be rejected. But, according to Dr. White,

the danger was warded off, by a proposal made by the Rev. Robert Smith, to accompany their compliance with the measure, by its being understood, that there was to be no bishop settled in the state. Such a proposal, from the gentleman who, it was presumed, would be the bishop, were there any chosen, had the effect intended. Some gentlemen, it is said, declared in conversation, that they had contemplated an opposition, but were prevented by this caution.<sup>21</sup>

Thus it was that South Carolina sent duly elected delegates to the Philadelphia Convention, with the explicit understanding that they were opposed to the episcopate in their state.<sup>22</sup> They were accepted at the Convention on their own terms.

<sup>20</sup> Dalcho, *op. cit.*, p. 466.

<sup>21</sup> White, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>22</sup> It has been stated that the churchmen of South Carolina did not object to having a bishop, but were determined to proceed with caution. (Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 10.)

There are no records extant of any meeting held in Maryland in the spring of 1785.<sup>23</sup> The Maryland churchmen had already had a state organizational meeting in June, 1784, at which time they had elected delegates to the Philadelphia Convention. Undoubtedly, they preferred to await developments from the General Convention, before proceeding further.

The only other state represented at the Philadelphia Convention was Delaware. As the delegates from there were officially accepted, it is probable that a preliminary convention had been held, though no record of it exists.<sup>24</sup>

One other preliminary meeting should be mentioned, as recorded by Dr. Perry:

In addition to these Conventions, there had been assembled in that portion of the present States of New Hampshire and Vermont, then known as the "Hampshire Grants," a meeting of Episcopalians from a number of neighboring towns, at which a delegate to the Convention in Philadelphia, in 1785, was duly appointed; and the same gentleman, General Roger Enos, deputed to attend the State Convention of Massachusetts with which the more northern Churches seemed to feel most closely allied. General Enos failed to present himself either at Philadelphia or Boston, and we hear little more of the Episcopalians of the Hampshire Grants.<sup>25</sup>

During the last five months of 1785, the supporters of the federal plan and of the ecclesiastical plan of reorganization were faced with two major problems. First there was the problem of establishing a basic church government for the former Church of England in the United States. Both groups wanted to act on a unified, national scale, but their ap-

<sup>23</sup> Maryland, *Journals*, p. 16.

<sup>24</sup> Rightmyer, *Delaware*, p. 181. The first recorded diocesan meeting in Delaware was in 1791.

<sup>25</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 67. Perry gives as his source for this information, some unpublished records in the keeping of the Registrar of the Diocese of New Hampshire. (*Ibid.*, footnote 1.)

proaches were so opposed that the danger of schism increased. The federal group continued to insist on the necessity of beginning with an ecclesiastical constitution, accepted voluntarily by the representatives of all the Episcopal churches. For the ecclesiastical group, church organization depended on a valid episcopate. The second problem concerned the Prayer Book. Both groups recognized the need of changes in the English liturgy, as a result of the Revolution, and both wanted a uniform liturgy, to be used by a united, nationwide Church. But their approaches to liturgical revision were so opposed that any agreement between them appeared impossible. Both groups held important organizational meetings in 1785 to cope with these problems.

The first meeting was the one arranged, at Bishop Seabury's request, for the Connecticut clergy, at Middletown, August 2-4, 1785.<sup>26</sup> It began as a regular clergy convention, with all the Connecticut clergy present. Jeremiah Leaming was elected president, and Abraham Jarvis, secretary. Two non-Connecticut clergymen were also present: the Rev. Benjamin Moore of New York as an interested visitor,<sup>27</sup> and the Rev. Samuel Parker as representative and emissary of the New England clergy.<sup>28</sup> Bishop Seabury's letters of consecration were read, after which the meeting was adjourned to the following day.

On the morning of August 3, 1785, four men were sent to

<sup>26</sup> *Early Conn. Conventions*, pp. 59-64.

<sup>27</sup> Moore's interest in Bishop Seabury had been evident in his letters to Parker during 1784. On February 14, 1785, he wrote: "There can be no doubt of the Validity of the Ordination. I am sure you will rejoice at it, and if he is so fortunate as to arrive safe in America, will join Heart and Hand with your staunch, Orthodox Brethren, in supporting our venerable Church upon true Episcopal Principles."

<sup>28</sup> The formal letter instructing Parker to represent Massachusetts at Middletown, signed by the Rev. Edward Bass of Newburyport, and the Rev. Nathaniel Fisher of Salem, is in the Morgan Manuscripts. Parker's intense interest in Seabury's progress is illustrated by the fact that, on May 7, 1785, he wrote to the Rev. Samuel Peters in London, for more information on the Scottish Church, in order to be able to support Seabury's consecration. (Parker, Letter to Peters, May 7, 1785. [N. Y. Hist. Soc.] )

Bishop Seabury to notify him formally that the Connecticut clergy accepted him as the Episcopal head of their Church. Two of the men returned to the convention with the bishop's formal acceptance of his new ecclesiastical responsibility. The other two remained with the bishop, to escort him to the church. There, he was seated in the bishop's chair in the chancel, while the Rev. Bela Hubbard read him the official greeting from the Connecticut clergy.<sup>29</sup>

The concept of episcopacy held by the clergy assembled at Middletown was clearly revealed in this, their first address to Bishop Seabury. They began by emphasizing their gratitude to God, who "now at last permits us to enjoy, under you, the long and ardently desired blessing of a pure, valid, and free Episcopacy—A blessing which we receive as the precious gift of God himself."<sup>30</sup> It was understood that an American Episcopate must be entirely free from state control. They were convinced that a valid episcopate was the only proper basis for the union of the former Church of England churches in the United States. They hoped that God would continue to support them, by making Bishop Seabury's consecration "a real benefit to our Church, not only in this state, but in the American states in general, by uniting them in doctrine, discipline and worship." The correctness of the process by which the Connecticut Episcopate had been established was pointed out. Seabury had been elected bishop by the Connecticut clergy, and his election had been ratified by the present convention, in their unanimous and voluntary acceptance of him as their Episcopal head.

<sup>29</sup> *Early Conn. Conventions*, p. 59.

<sup>30</sup> *The Address of the Episcopal Clergy of Connecticut to the Right Reverend Bishop Seabury, with the Bishop's Answer, and a Sermon, before the Convention at Middletown, August 3, 1785, by the Reverend Jeremiah Leaming, A. M., Rector of Christ's Church, Stratford. Also Bishop Seabury's first Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese, Delivered at Middletown, August 4, 1785* (New Haven, 1785), p. 3. Yale University Library. Hereinafter referred to as *The Middletown Papers*.



And we do solemnly engage to render you all that respect, duty, and submission, which we believe do belong, and are due to your high office, and which, we understand, were given by the presbyters to their bishop in the primitive Church, while, in her native purity, she was unconnected with, and uncontrolled by any secular power.

The Connecticut clergy acknowledged their disappointment in not having received the apostolic succession directly from the English bishops, but expressed their gratitude that Seabury had been successful in Scotland. The address closed with a fervent expression of thanks to the Scottish bishops.

The bishop's answer to the address of his clergy was brief. He began by expressing gratitude to God for the successful completion of his mission, and gratitude to his clergy for their promised support. He was pleased that their support was given "upon the true principles of the primitive Church, before it was controlled and corrupted by secular connections and worldly policy." Seabury had learned to distrust the close relation between church and state, which had prevented him from obtaining consecration in England. He praised the Scottish bishops for conducting themselves "by the true principles of the primitive, apostolical Church." Bishop Seabury ended with the hope that they, his clergy, would join with him in expressing gratitude to the Scottish bishops "by always keeping up the most intimate communion with them and their suffering Church."

Following the bishop's address, the clergy knelt before him at the chancel rail, to receive his apostolic benediction, and then retired to their pews for the ordination service which followed. There were present four candidates to the diaconate: three from Connecticut, and one from Maryland. The account given of the service was as follows:

The bishop began the divine service with the Litany, according to the rubric in the office for the ordination of deacons. . . .

The Litany being ended, Mr. Bowden read the first communion service. The bishop then read the service, consecrated the elements, and administered the bread. Mr. Bowden assisted by administering the cup. The communion being finished, the bishop proceeded to the ordination.<sup>31</sup>

After the ordination service, there was a sermon by the Rev. Jeremiah Leaming; then the congregation was dismissed by the bishop.<sup>32</sup>

An historic moment followed: the last convention of Episcopal clergy in Connecticut was terminated, and the first convocation announced. The event was tersely described in the minutes of the meeting.<sup>33</sup> It was recorded that "from the church, the clergy, preceded by the bishop, returned to the parsonage." There, having thanked the Rev. Mr. Leaming for his sermon, "the bishop dissolved the convention and directed the clergy to meet him at five o'clock in convocation." The Church in Connecticut was complete. The clergy were now united under the authority of a duly consecrated episcopal head, by whom all future meetings would be called.

The clergy met with the bishop at five o'clock the afternoon of August 3, 1785, only to adjourn to the following morning. Apparently they had been convoked to give the bishop a chance to meet and talk with them informally. The first formal convocation was held the next morning, August 4, 1785, at eleven o'clock. It was opened with divine service, at which the two visiting clergymen officiated—Dr. Parker reading prayers, and Mr. Moore preaching the sermon. At the close of the sermon, Bishop Seabury delivered his first charge to his clergy.

The bishop began with a formal salutation to his clergy, and then expressed his thankfulness for the successful comple-

<sup>31</sup> *Early Conn. Conventions*, p. 60.

<sup>32</sup> Leaming, Sermon of August 3, 1785. *The Middletown Papers*. pp. 1-18.

<sup>33</sup> *Early Conn. Conventions*, p. 60.

tion of his journey overseas, and his special gratitude towards the Scottish bishops.<sup>34</sup> He spoke of his feeling of unworthiness for the great task before him, and his consciousness of his need of their help. He then turned to the three points he wanted to stress as needing their immediate attention. First, he warned them to be very careful of the doctrines which they preached to their congregations, as "the care of their souls is by Christ and his Church committed to you; and that you must give an awful account of them in the day of judgment." In the second place, he reminded them of their obligation to recommend only worthy candidates for ordination, by which he meant

not so much literary accomplishments, though these are not to be neglected, as aptitude for the ministry . . . to be a *good* Clergyman implies, among other things, that a man be a *useful* one. A Clergyman who does no *good*, always does hurt; there is no medium.

His third point, the importance of confirmation, Seabury developed at great length. As there had been no bishop in the Colonies to administer the rite of confirmation, it had been neglected and little valued. In all probability, few of the men he was addressing had been confirmed, certainly not those who had grown up in the Colonies. Seabury gave his clergy detailed instruction on the rite, which was now possible in America for the first time. He quoted biblical authority, and added arguments in support of the practice. The meaning of confirmation he explained as follows:

In Confirmation, by the imposition of the hands of the Bishop and prayer, we believe the Holy Spirit to be given for sanctification, i.e., for carrying into effect that regeneration which is conferred in Baptism. By Baptism we are taken out of our

<sup>34</sup> *Bishop Seabury's first Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese, Delivered at Middletown, August 4, 1785. The Middletown Papers*, pp. 1-15.

natural state of sin and death, into which we are born by our natural birth, and are translated, transplanted, or born again into the Church of Christ, a state of grace, and endless life; and by Confirmation, or the imposition of the hands of the Bishop, when we personally ratify our baptismal vow and covenant, we are endued with the Holy Spirit to enable us to overcome sin, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.

The age at which one should be confirmed varied, Seabury stated, and the parish minister was to be the judge as to when a person was of "competent reason and understanding." Seabury listed many benefits resulting from confirmation, which can be summarized by quoting the beginning and end of his enumeration of them:

It enters us into a new engagement to be the Lord's and to lead a holy and Christian life . . . and by it also God condescends to communicate supernatural strength, even the gift of his blessed Spirit, to enable them to encounter and vanquish their spiritual enemies, and fulfill the terms of the gospel.

Seabury closed by emphasizing that he had talked at length about confirmation, because he expected them to give instructions on the rite to their own parishioners. The bishop's charge ended with a benediction.

It was after the bishop's charge that the Rev. Dr. Parker presented himself to the convocation as having been instructed by the clergy of Massachusetts, "to collect the sentiments of the Connecticut clergy in respect to Dr. Seabury's Episcopal consecration, the regulation of his Episcopal jurisdiction" and to indicate "their thoughts of connecting themselves with them under his Episcopal charge."<sup>35</sup> Dr. Parker's statement was enthusiastically received, and the desire for a union between the clergy of the two states warmly expressed. The plan of the ecclesiastical group, to unite the Episcopal

<sup>35</sup> *Early Conn. Conventions*, p. 61.

churches in America under the authority of a duly consecrated bishop, seemed one step nearer to realization.

The Connecticut convocation met again on August 5, 1785, to discuss the second major problem faced by the Episcopal churches in America—the revision of the Prayer Book. A committee was appointed “to consider of, and make with the bishop some alterations in the Liturgy needful for the present use of the Church.” The convocation then adjourned, to meet again the following month in New Haven. The committee (consisting of Dr. Parker, Mr. Bowden, Mr. Jarvis, and the bishop) remained in Middletown to work out the necessary liturgical changes.<sup>36</sup>

Three characteristics of the approach of the Connecticut clergy to the revision of the Prayer Book were clear from the start. First, they agreed that no liturgical changes could be made without the authority of the bishop. Second, they wanted as few changes as possible, and, third, they were determined to move slowly, carefully considering each change suggested. Maintaining continuity with the Church of England, and uniformity among the churches in America were more important to them than making the revisions made necessary by the Revolution.

Before leaving Middletown, the liturgical committee attended a second ordination service. On Sunday, August 7, 1785, the Rev. Colin Ferguson of Maryland, who had been ordained deacon the preceding Thursday, was raised to the priesthood by Bishop Seabury, and Thomas Fitch Oliver of Providence, Rhode Island, was ordained deacon.<sup>37</sup> The fact that Bishop Seabury consented to ordain men from other states increased the tensions between the ecclesiastical and federal groups. As the limits of his jurisdiction had not been determined, and as he was the only consecrated bishop in

<sup>36</sup> According to Parker, it was at his request that liturgical revisions were undertaken at this time. (Parker, Letter to White, September 14, 1785, in Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 90.)

<sup>37</sup> Beardsley, *op. cit.*, pp. 214, 215.

the American states, Bishop Seabury considered it his duty to accept candidates who came to him well recommended. Many of the federal group protested that he was attempting to usurp their authority. Misunderstanding and mutual distrust increased.<sup>38</sup>

Shortly after his return to New London, Bishop Seabury wrote several important letters. On August 12, 1785, he sent a pastoral letter to his clergy with instructions on liturgical revisions.<sup>39</sup> In Connecticut, all royal prayers were to be omitted, and a new prayer added for the State Assembly. Specific English observances, for January 13, May 29, October 25, and November 5, were to be discontinued. No further changes were to be introduced at the present time. On August 19, 1785, he wrote to Parker, to thank him for his assistance at Middletown. In this letter he mentioned three more candidates for Holy Orders, one from Maryland and two from New Jersey. Parker had been present at the first two ordination services, and had approved of Bishop Seabury's actions.

A third letter, written during the same week, contained a carefully composed statement of Bishop Seabury's criticisms of the federal plan of reorganization. It was addressed to Dr. William Smith in Maryland, but it was meant to be read at the coming General Convention in Philadelphia. Seabury sent a copy of this letter to Dr. White, through the Rev. T. B. Chandler of New Jersey. When forwarding the letter to White, Chandler wrote a covering letter of his own, reemphasizing the points made by the bishop. The two supporters of the ecclesiastical plan were concerned to explain their convictions and to point out the errors of the federal plan,

<sup>38</sup> Bishop Seabury's right to ordain men from other states remained an issue for a long time. For example, cf. Wm. Smith, Letter to Seabury, July 12, 1786. (N. Y. Hist. Soc.)

<sup>39</sup> Seabury, Broadside on liturgical revisions, issued August 12, 1785. [Morgan Manuscripts.] No mention was made of the change in the communion office, which Seabury had promised to try to introduce—an illustration of the Connecticut determination to alter slowly.

for, as the time of the General Convention drew close, they were fearful for the future of episcopacy in America. Both men believed, as Chandler wrote, that "the fate of the Episcopal Church in America will, in a great measure, depend upon the deliberations and decisions of that general meeting."

Three main objections to the procedure of the federal group were made by Seabury and reinforced by Chandler in their letters to White. The first objection was briefly stated by Seabury. He believed that they had made a mistake to establish "so many, and so precise, fundamental rules," as they had cut themselves off "from the benefit of after consideration." Should the rules need to be altered, Seabury feared that a public debate, in so large an assembly, would lead to disunity. Chandler added to this the further objection that the rules had been made without the authority of a bishop. He emphasized his point by specific references to the recent Virginia convention, whose "proper business," he insisted, had been

to concert measures for compleating its constitution, by the introduction of an Episcopate as soon as possible. Here . . . they ought to have stopt; and not to have proceeded *to organize the government of the Church*, and to establish Canons, or rules for its future order, government and discipline. . . . It was never heard of before, that the Presbyters only, or the Presbyters and the Laity, of an *Episcopal Church*, undertook to make ecclesiastical *Canons*; which is the peculiar office of the Bishop or Bishops, with the advice of their Clergy.

The second objection of Bishop Seabury was to the statement accepted by the New York Convention of 1784, that a bishop differed from other priests only in the power of ordination and confirmation. A bishop also had special authority to govern. "Government as essentially pertains to Bps as ordination. . . . Whatever share of government Presbyters

have in the Ch'ch, they have from the Bp, and must exercise it in conjunction with, or in subordination to him." The laity, too, were governed by their bishop. Although a congregation might be permitted to choose their own minister, his authority to take charge of that congregation must come through his bishop, "because they are part of his [the bishop's] charge; he has the care of their Souls, and is accountable for them." The power of the laity ought not to be increased, for "the people being the patrons of the Ch'ches in this country, and having the means of the Bps and ministers support in their hands, have a sufficient restraint upon them." Dr. Chandler insisted succinctly on the bishop's right to govern the Church: "If the Bishops are not allowed to govern the Church, the Church is not under *Episcopal* government, and cannot be Episcopal; but is under the government of those who govern the Bishops."

The third objection was to permitting the laity to vote in ecclesiastical councils, thus giving them the right to sit in judgment on bishops and presbyters. Both writers believed that to do so was to deny the authority of the apostolic succession. Convinced as they were of the divine source of episcopal authority, Seabury and Chandler completely rejected the contract theory as a basis for church government. Seabury wrote:

the rights of the Christian Ch'ch arise not from nature or compact, but from the institution of Christ; and we ought not to alter them, but to receive and maintain them, as the holy Apostles left them. The government, sacraments, faith and doctrines of the Ch'ch are fixed and settled.

Chandler wrote:

The Church is a Society founded by Christ; all ecclesiastical authority and jurisdiction must be derived from *him*, and not from any *natural rights*, &c.;—this authority he was pleased to



lodge in the hands of certain *officers* of his appointment, to be communicated to their successors; those, therefore, who are *not officers* in the Church, i.e. *the Laity*, can have no share of ecclesiastical authority.

Both men agreed that it was impossible to permit the laity any control over the bishops or presbyters, "because they cannot take away a character which they cannot confer. It is incongruous to every idea of Episcopal government." Both used the constitution of the Church of Connecticut as an example of one that "is now compleated . . . upon right principles."

These letters to Dr. White were written in the hope of preventing the federal group from taking any action so contrary to the convictions of the ecclesiastical group that schism would be inevitable. Of his desire for unity, Seabury wrote:

I do most earnestly wish to have our Ch'ch in all the States so settled that it may be one Ch'ch, united in government, doctrine, and discipline—that there may be no divisions among us—no opposition of interests—no clashing of opinions. And permit me to hope that you will at your approaching Convention so far receed on the points I have mentioned, as to make this practicable.

His letter ended:

May the Spirit of God be with you at Philadelphia; and as I persuade myself, the sole good of his Ch'ch is the sole aim of you all, I hope for the best effects from your meeting.

Shortly after Parker's return from Middletown, a convention of representatives of the Episcopal churches in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, was held at Boston. As the meeting had been arranged a year in advance, Parker knew its purpose would be to "deliberate upon some

plan of maintaining uniformity in divine worship and adopting such measures as may tend to the union and prosperity of the Episcopal Churches of the American States.”<sup>40</sup> Before going to Connecticut, he had learned the attitude towards Prayer Book revision of the Rev. Edward Bass of Newburyport, one of the prominent clergymen in Massachusetts.<sup>41</sup> In Middletown, as one of the liturgical committee, Parker had discussed possible alterations with the Connecticut clergy and their bishop. He had returned home with first hand information as to the Prayer Book revisions authorized in Connecticut, to present to the members of the Boston convention for their consideration.

The convention met on September 7 and 8, 1785. Present were five clergymen, all from Massachusetts, and ten laymen: seven from Massachusetts, two from Rhode Island, and one from New Hampshire. The Rev. Edward Bass was elected president, and the Rev. Nathaniel Fisher, secretary. It was agreed “that the Clergy and Laity now assembled shall deliberate in one body, but shall vote separately, and the concurrence of both orders shall be necessary to give validity to every measure.”<sup>42</sup> The main business of the convention was for the representatives to decide on the alterations in the Prayer Book, which they deemed advisable. They began their deliberations by examining the omissions and changes ordered by Bishop Seabury for the Connecticut Church. There was general agreement that all the prayers for the royal family either be dropped or altered to read “for this Commonwealth.” The special services for English holidays were also to be dropped. The Boston convention then considered

<sup>40</sup> “Minutes of the First Conventions of the Diocese of Massachusetts,” *Hist. Mag.*, IX (June, 1940), 155. From the letter sent in the name of the Boston convention of September, 1784, to all the Episcopal churches in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire. Hereinafter referred to as *First Mass. Conventions*.

<sup>41</sup> Bass, Letter to Parker, July 7, 1785.

<sup>42</sup> *First Mass. Conventions*, p. 156.

some further alterations, which seem to have originated in Newburyport. In July, Bass had written Parker that he thought the Athanasian Creed should be omitted, and the repetition of the Lord's prayer avoided.<sup>43</sup> The detailed instructions drawn up for Tristram Dalton, lay representative from Newburyport, consisted of Bass' suggestions with several additions.<sup>44</sup> In the service of baptism, parents were to be admitted as sponsors, and the sign of the cross omitted, if desired by the sponsors. In the office of the Visitation of the Sick, the Absolution was to be expunged. The members of the convention were sympathetic to these alterations, and wanted more. They proceeded through the Prayer Book, suggesting changes in words and phrases in each of its offices.<sup>45</sup> Their suggestions in regard to the creeds later proved most controversial. Besides dropping the Athanasian Creed, they wished to make the Nicene Creed optional, and to omit the phrase "He descended to Hell" from the Apostles' Creed. In presenting their conclusions, the representatives at Boston made a distinction between recommendations and suggestions. They recommended that all their churches immediately adopt the proposed substitutes for the state prayers, but "that the using the other alterations be postponed . . . in order that it may be seen, how far the other States will conform to said alterations."<sup>46</sup>

Before disbanding, the convention voted "that it was not necessary nor convenient to send a Delegate or Delegates to the General Convention to be holden at Philadelphia." Instead, a copy of the changes agreed on in Boston was to be

<sup>43</sup> Bass, *op. cit.*

<sup>44</sup> "Instructions to Tristram Dalton, lay representative to the Boston convention of September, 1785, for Newburyport, drawn up August 10, 1785," in D. D. Addison, *The Life and Times of Edward Bass* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1897), pp. 243-248.

<sup>45</sup> The long list of changes suggested is given in full in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-97.

<sup>46</sup> *First Mass. Conventions*, p. 157. See also pp. 158-159.

sent to the General Convention, and one to Bishop Seabury, before the next Connecticut convocation, "requesting a speedy communication of each of their proceedings" in return. Copies were also sent to the Rev. Bela Hubbard in Connecticut, to Dr. William White in Philadelphia and to the Rev. Benjamin Moore in New York, besides being widely distributed among the churches of the three states which had constituted the convention. The Boston group was working for church unity through a uniform liturgy. As they received no responses from Connecticut or Philadelphia for many months, their next convention was postponed three times

in order that we may be well apprized of the doings of General Convention, and of the Bishop and Clergy of Connecticut, before we come to a final conclusion respecting the alterations proposed by our own convention.

No further meeting was held by the Boston group until the summer of 1786.

With the copy of the proposed Prayer Book changes sent to Seabury, Parker included a personal letter, emphasizing his desire for uniformity. After commenting briefly on the Boston convention, he wrote of the coming General Convention:

I flatter myself that no other alterations will be adopted than those we proposed at Middletown, and have agreed to here. If they are so prudent as to pursue the same steps, the desired object of a general uniformity will thereby be obtained. As to any further revision of the Book of Common Prayer, I shall strenuously oppose it, until there are three or more Bishops in these States, and then let the power of revising the Prayer Book be vested solely with them and the clergy. Should the alterations now proposed take place, the laity, I have no doubt, will be perfectly contented.

In the letter accompanying the copy of the proposed Prayer Book changes sent to White, Parker revealed his par-

tial sympathy with both the ecclesiastical and federal minded churchmen. He began by criticizing the federal group for their inadequate understanding of episcopacy, as evidenced in the New York Convention of 1784. Their agreement, in the fifth of their fundamental principles, that the bishop would be merely a member *ex officio* at church conventions, showed their failure to grasp the true character of a bishop in the apostolic succession. The right of precedence in ecclesiastical assemblies could not be taken away from a duly consecrated bishop. Their attitude towards the episcopate, Parker declared, was the reason for Bishop Seabury's unwillingness to attend the coming General Convention, and would cause the Convention "to be stigmatized as Anti-Episcopalian." In the matter of Prayer Book revision, Parker was closer to the federal group. He accepted the fact that some alterations would be agreed to by the Convention, lay and clergy deputies acting together. He explained to White that the revisions enclosed were those approved in Connecticut and in Boston, with additional changes proposed at Boston. For the sake of national uniformity, he hoped they would be presented for consideration at the coming General Convention. He wrote:

Whether or not you will find time to revise the Canons, Articles &., of the Church, and the Liturgy also, or which you will enter upon first, is uncertain. I rather think that Canons and Articles, or an Ecclesiastical Constitution should be left to your Bishop (when you have one) with his Clergy; the Laity seem to be more concerned with the Liturgy.

Parker admitted that the Boston group wanted some radical changes.<sup>47</sup> The principle of holding to the English Prayer Book, advocated by the New York Convention of 1784, he declared, "is disgusting to many of our Communion who neither like the Doctrines held by the Church of England

<sup>47</sup> The changes proposed at Boston in the use of the creeds illustrate this point.

nor the Liturgy as it now stands." Parker's concept of episcopacy was the same as Seabury's, but, in the matter of Prayer Book revision, he was more in agreement with White and Smith.<sup>48</sup>

The Connecticut convocation, to which the liturgical revisions proposed by the Boston meeting had been sent, met at New Haven, on September 15, 1785, immediately following the annual commencement of Yale College. The first business was to write a letter of thanks to the Scottish bishops from the Connecticut clergy. The convocation then examined the testimonials of all the candidates for Holy Orders to determine their fitness. On September 16, two men from New Jersey, and one from Maryland were ordained, and, two days later, they were advanced to the priesthood. Four others were advanced to the priesthood, one of whom was from Connecticut.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the Connecticut clergy reaffirmed their belief in Bishop Seabury's right to ordain candidates from other states. No liturgical revisions were considered. On September 17, 1785, the Rev. Bela Hubbard, secretary to the convocation, wrote to Dr. Parker: "As to the alteration proposed by your Convention on the good old Book of Common Prayer, I can only say, that our Convocation are slow in taking up a matter of so much consequence. A later letter from Bishop Seabury added the following comment:

Between the time of our parting at Middletown and the Clerical meeting at New Haven, it was found that the Church people in Connecticut were much alarmed at the thoughts of any considerable alterations being made in the Prayer Book; and, upon the whole, it was judged best that no alterations should be attempted at present, but to wait till a little time shall have cooled down the tempers and conciliated the affections of the people to each other.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>48</sup> The Proposed Prayer Book of 1786, for which White and Smith were largely responsible, incorporated most of the Boston ideas.

<sup>49</sup> Beardsley, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

<sup>50</sup> Seabury, Letter to Parker, November 28, 1785, in Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

The Connecticut clergy was determined to retain the English Prayer Book as nearly unchanged as possible.

On September 20, 1785, a week before the General Convention, Dr. Chandler of New Jersey wrote again to White. Chandler was conciliatory but critical. He said that, in private conversation, he believed they would find many points of agreement. He continued: "There is however, *one* point, on which at present we seem to think very differently; I mean *the right of the Laity* to some share of ecclesiastical authority." To support his position, Chandler referred, in a general way, to Hooker and various other writers. Chandler wrote:

In short, this is a *radical* point, and I entreat you not to give your consent to robbing Episcopacy of its essential rights. I am the more urgent with *you* on this head, as I hope the time is not far distant when I am to see you vested with the Episcopal character.

The argument that the laity in the English Church had the final voice in ecclesiastical matters through the authority of Parliament, seemed irrelevant to Chandler, where there was no establishment. As the laity controlled all the church livings in America and "have an unquestionable right to prefer complaints or well founded accusations against them [the clergy], I think," he wrote, "they have *check* enough in all conscience." In the conclusion of his letter, Chandler showed his desire to work with White, but also his misgivings, when he said

that the explanation of some points given in your last Letter, has afforded me much satisfaction as it shews that we are not so different in our opinions, as I at first imagined. I wish the Convention may be, in reality, as favourable to Episcopacy as your explanation is—but I have my fears.

The ecclesiastical group had done all that they could to influence the actions of the coming General Convention.

On September 27, 1785, the Convention met in Philadelphia with delegates from seven states being present: Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, and South Carolina.<sup>51</sup> The four New England states: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island were absent because of their loyalty to Bishop Seabury. The Episcopal churches in North Carolina and Georgia were too weak to organize. Of the sixteen clerical deputies at the Convention, five were from Maryland and five from Pennsylvania, and half of the twenty-six lay deputies were from Pennsylvania. The representation was not as general as White had hoped.<sup>52</sup> Dr. White was chosen president, and the Rev. David Griffith of Virginia, secretary.

The first business session was held on September 28, 1785. The deputies were asked to produce their credentials, after which they were recognized as duly elected representatives of their various states. The Convention then proceeded to the consideration of the fundamental principles recommended by the New York Convention of the preceding year. Two of those principles had been unfavorably criticized. Number four, on adhering to the English doctrine and liturgy, was not ratified by the Convention, which, instead, set up a committee

consisting of one Clerical and one Lay-Deputy from the Church in each state, to consider such alterations in the Liturgy, as shall render it consistent with the American revolution and the constitutions of the respective states: And such further alterations in the Liturgy, as it may be advisable for this Convention to recommend to the consideration of the Church here represented.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>51</sup> Bioren, *Journals*, pp. 1-16. Cf. above, Chap. III, note 84. W. B. Stevens, *Early History of the Church in Georgia, A Discourse* delivered May 22, 1873, in Christ Church, Savannah, Georgia (Philadelphia, 1873), pp. 58-67.

<sup>52</sup> Compare with the complete list of clergy in the United States on the same date. (Stowe, Rightmyer, Brydon, London, and Thomas, "The Clergy of the Episcopal Church in 1785," *Hist. Mag.*, XX (Sept. 1951), 243-277.

<sup>53</sup> Bioren, *Journals*, p. 5.



In connection with the sixth article, giving the lay representatives a vote, Bishop Seabury's letter to Dr. Smith was read as requested. It aroused considerable indignation among the laity.<sup>54</sup> The article was ratified by the Convention, with the understanding "that the Deputies vote according to the states from which they come, and not individually."<sup>55</sup> The remaining five articles were ratified without difficulty. A committee was then appointed, consisting of one clergyman and one lay delegate from each state, to draft and report an ecclesiastical constitution for the Church in America. Within the next two days, the same committee was made responsible for preliminary reports on the other two problems with which the Convention was concerned: liturgical revision, and a plan for obtaining the consecration of bishops for America in the English succession.

On October 4, 1785, an ecclesiastical constitution, drafted by Dr. White,<sup>56</sup> was reported by the committee, considered paragraph by paragraph by the Convention, and finally adopted. However, "it stood on recommendation only," as it still had to be ratified by the individual state conventions in order to be binding. The constitution as adopted followed very closely the basic principles agreed on in New York.<sup>57</sup> Altogether it had eleven points. (1) A General Convention was set up for the following year, and every three years thereafter. (2) Both clergy and laity were to be represented in all general and (3) in all state conventions. The principle of lay representation, so distasteful to the Connecticut clergy, was thus made mandatory. The liturgy was considered in (4) and (9): according to (4) the English usage was to be retained, except as amended by the alterations already ratified by the Convention, but (9) the need of further revision was recognized. Any alterations proposed by the General

<sup>54</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 100.

<sup>55</sup> Bioren, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> White, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>57</sup> Bioren, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-10.

Convention would be binding only when ratified by the state conventions. Three articles dealt with episcopacy. According to (5) a duly consecrated bishop, as in the New York statement, would be merely an *ex officio* member of the Convention. The right of each state to choose its own bishop in its own fashion was established in (6), but the bishop's jurisdiction was limited to his own state, except on special request from a church in another state that was "destitute of a Bishop." (8) Bishops, as well as presbyters and deacons, were to be under the final authority of their state conventions. White later tried to explain (5) and (8). The clergy let (5) pass, he said, "because it contained nothing contrary to the principle of Episcopal presidency."<sup>58</sup> He explained (8) as faulty

rather in omission than in anything declared. For the bishop's being amenable to the convention in the state to which he belonged, does not necessarily involve anything more, than that he should be triable by laws of their enacting, himself being a part of the body: and it did not follow, that he might be deposed or censured, either by laymen or by presbyters.<sup>59</sup>

The three remaining articles were less controversial. (7) Any Episcopal church in any of the states not represented in the present Convention could "hereafter be admitted, on acceding to the articles of this union." The one article concerning belief, (10), was to replace the English requirement that candidates for ordination subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles. In the American Church, each candidate was to be required to subscribe to the following declaration:

I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the doc-

<sup>58</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>59</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

trines and worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church, as settled and determined in the Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments, set forth by the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in these United States.<sup>60</sup>

The oath of allegiance to the crown was here replaced by the acceptance of the General Convention as the final authority in all church matters. The Anglican respect for a rule of law was further emphasized in the final article, (11): The ecclesiastical constitution, once ratified, was to be binding on the Church, and could not be changed by any state convention.

While approving the constitution, the Convention was also considering liturgical revision. On October 1, 1785, the suggested changes had been separated into two divisions for separate action: revisions made necessary by the Revolution, and further proposed alterations. After two full days (four sessions in all) of discussion, it was resolved that the proposed changes be transcribed under the direction of Dr. Smith. On October 5, 1785, the transcribed copy of the "Alterations in the Liturgy in order to render it consistent with the American Revolution and the Constitutions of the various States" was read, approved, and ratified.<sup>61</sup> In general, the changes in this document were the same as those approved in the Boston convention: Some of the royal prayers were dropped, some changed to read "for those in authority," and the special offices for the English commemorative days were eliminated.<sup>62</sup> To these was added a resolution that the Fourth of July be a day of special thanksgiving, with a special service "to be observed by this Church for ever."<sup>63</sup> For the clergy who had been loyalists in the Revolution, this proved

<sup>60</sup> Bioren, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-111. These proposed changes were not inserted in the minutes of the original meeting.

<sup>63</sup> Bioren, *op. cit.*

a stumbling block, and it became one of the points that created difficulties later.<sup>64</sup>

The liturgical committee then presented suggestions for a more drastic revision of the Prayer Book. The changes approved at Boston were incorporated, and others added. Both the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds were dropped, passages from the psalms were omitted, and the Articles of Religion reduced to twenty. The term "minister" replaced "priest." A special service of thanksgiving for the Fourth of July was added.<sup>65</sup> This entire report was read, approved, and ordered to be published, but it was not ratified.<sup>66</sup> The result was the "Proposed Book" of 1785, a Book of Common Prayer which was "proposed and recommended to the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the States from which there are deputies to this Convention," but which was never adopted.<sup>67</sup>

At the final business session of the Convention, on the evening of October 5, 1785, a plan was considered for obtaining an episcopate from England. It was resolved to request the archbishops of the Church of England to consecrate such persons as should be chosen and recommended by their state conventions. Each state was to set up its own committee to correspond with the English bishops, but until the state committees were organized, a convention committee was appointed, chaired by Dr. White. The objections, which had been raised against consecrating Seabury, were to be met in advance. As White said: "Bishop Seabury's failure in England, the causes of it, seemed to point out a way of obviating

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Provoost, Letter to White, May, 1786.

<sup>65</sup> The proposed service for the Fourth of July is given in full, Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 111-113.

<sup>66</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 377.

<sup>67</sup> *Book of Common Prayer and administration of the Sacraments and other rites and ceremonies, as revised and proposed to the use of the Protestant Episcopal Church, at a convention of the said church in the States of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina held in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1786). [Yale University Library.] See also Bioren, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

the difficulty in the present case.”<sup>68</sup> The English bishops would be assured that the laity, as well as the clergy, had approved each candidate chosen. Furthermore, a certificate of legality was to be procured in each state, to accompany any request for consecration. That American bishops would have no temporal rank was clearly recorded in the resolution that

whereas the Bishops of this Church will not be entitled to any of such temporal honors as are due to the Archbishops and Bishops of the parent Church, in quality of Lords of Parliament; and whereas the reputation and usefulness of our Bishops will considerably depend on their taking no higher titles or stile than will be due to their spiritual employments, they are to be called “The Right Rev. *A. B.* Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in *C. D.*” and as Bishop may have no other title; and may not use any such stile as is usually descriptive of temporal power and precedency.<sup>69</sup>

Following the resolutions on procedure in the minutes is a copy of the letter sent to the English bishops, signed by the clergy and lay deputies. The desire of the American churchmen to retain their unity with the English Church was made clear. They wrote:

Our forefathers, when they left the land of their nativity, did not leave the bosom of the Church over which your Lordships preside, but, as from an attachment to the admirable services of our Liturgy, continued in willing connection with their ecclesiastical superiors in England, and were subjected to many local inconveniences, rather than break the unity of the Church to which they belonged.

Even the Revolution was not to prevent their continuing in the English line, they hoped, as “it was their earnest desire

<sup>68</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

<sup>69</sup> Bioren, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-15. The quotations that follow will also be found here.

and resolution to retain the venerable form of Episcopal government handed down to them, as they conceive, from the time of the Apostles." They then explained that the churches in the States were so scattered and disunified that they had felt it necessary to take time to form a representative body, with the authority to speak for the Church in America. As such a body, they were now asking that the episcopal character be conferred on such as should be recommended by their individual states. They hoped there would be no political impediments, for "as citizens of these States, interested in their prosperity, and religiously regarding the allegiance which we owe them, it is to an ecclesiastical source only we can apply in the present exigency." They explained further that the policy of separation between Church and state in America made it impossible for the rulers to apply officially for bishops, but no objection to an American Episcopate existed. With the grateful remembrance of past benefits and some compliments to their lordships, the letter closed.

The letter was dated October 5, 1785, and on October 7, the Convention drew to a close. At the final divine service in Christ Church, "the Liturgy, as altered, was read by the Reverend Dr. White, and a suitable sermon was preached by the Reverend Dr. Smith."<sup>70</sup> This was one of the few times that the Proposed Book was used anywhere in the Church. That evening the deputies met, thanked Dr. Smith for his sermon, and adjourned. The General Convention of 1785 was ended.

After the Convention, the federal group continued with their plan to obtain three duly consecrated bishops in the English line. Encouraging word had been received from England. The Rev. Alexander Murray had written to White, July 16, that an application made to the Archbishop of Canterbury by "such a public, respectable Body of men," as those

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

making up the Convention, would surely succeed. On September 10, 1785, Granville Sharp had been assured by the archbishop at Lambeth "that the Administration would be inclined to give leave to the bishops to consecrate proper persons."<sup>71</sup> The main responsibility of the Americans was to assure the English bishops that there would be no political objections to the consecration of their candidates. On October 24, 1785, his Excellency Richard Henry Lee, Esq., then president of Congress, wrote a letter to his Excellency John Adams, Esq., Minister for the United States in London, asking him

to remove mistaken scruples from the mind of administration, by representing how perfectly consonant it is with our revolution principles, professed throughout all these states, that every denomination of Christians has a right to pursue its own religious modes, interfering not with others.<sup>72</sup>

A copy of the letter from the General Convention to the English bishops was also sent to Mr. Adams, and "certificates from the executives of the states in which there was a probability of there being bishops chosen."<sup>73</sup> These certificates had been procured as recommended by the Convention. Immediately after its adjournment, the Pennsylvania dep-

<sup>71</sup> Beardsley, *op. cit.*, p. 242. Quoted from Granville Sharp's diary, under the date of September 10, 1785. Benjamin Franklin sent some letters from Sharp to White, just before the close of the General Convention. (White, *op. cit.*, p. 123.)

<sup>72</sup> White, *op. cit.*, pp. 325-26. Lee's point of view is revealed in a letter, written two weeks earlier, commenting on the General Convention, as follows: "It is with infinite pleasure I learned that our Church Convention of Philadelphia have concluded their business with great concord, the surest pledge of future success of their system. It was a circumstances of much advantage that their councils were not disturbed by the mischievous High Church principles that prevail with the non-juring Episcopalians of these northern regions, who, with Bishop Seabury at their head would have been sufficient to disturb the Moderate Councils of any Whig Assembly in the world." [J. C. Ballagh (ed.), *Letters of Richard Henry Lee* (New York, 1914), II, 388. From a letter to an unknown person, dated October 10, 1785.] Used by the permission of the Society of Colonial Dames of America.

<sup>73</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

uties had petitioned the Executive Council of their state,<sup>74</sup> and had received an official reply that they were

at liberty to take such means as they may think proper, for keeping up a succession of religious teachers—Provided only, that the measures they adopt for this purpose do not induce a subjection to any foreign jurisdiction, civil or ecclesiastical.<sup>75</sup>

Similar certificates were procured for New York, and for Virginia. Thus, the Americans tried to reassure the English that an American Episcopate would not be politically objectionable.<sup>76</sup>

It soon became evident that the Proposed Book, issued so hastily by the Philadelphia Convention, was strongly objected to on every side. Reactions against it began at once, and continued through 1786. A brief summary of the objections from the seven states which had been represented at the Convention may be useful at this point.<sup>77</sup> Pennsylvania and Maryland both wanted the Nicene Creed restored. William West of Maryland also wanted the phrase "he descended to Hell" reinstated.<sup>78</sup> New Jersey, in commenting on the changes made, regretted "the unseasonableness and irregularity of them." Virginia objected to a rubric in the communion office on the "discipline of notorious livers." Delaware never even considered the book. Dr. White, who had helped pro-

<sup>74</sup> Deputies of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Pennsylvania to a general ecclesiastical Convention of that Church, *Petition to the Honourable Supreme Executive Council of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 279-280.

<sup>75</sup> Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, *Certificate to clergy and lay members of the Church of England in Pennsylvania*, November 24, 1785, in Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

<sup>76</sup> Governor George Clinton of New York, *Certificate to whom it may concern*, December 28, 1785, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 281-282. Governor Patrick Henry of Virginia, *Certificate to whom it may concern*, June 1, 1786, in Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 282.

<sup>77</sup> E. C. Chorley, "General Conventions," *Hist. Mag.*, IV (Dec., 1935), 257-258. The references in this paragraph are to Chorley's summary, except when otherwise indicated.

<sup>78</sup> West, Letter to White, November 3, 1785, in Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 293.



duce the book, felt that in this matter "the labors of the Convention had not reached their object."<sup>79</sup> In retrospect, he pointed out what seemed to him two serious errors: (1) that a large edition was printed though the book had only been proposed and not ratified; and (2) that it was used in the final service of the Convention, making it appear official.<sup>80</sup> For a short time, some of the Philadelphia clergy used the Proposed Book, but it was never officially accepted even by the states which had proposed it.

One important revision was suggested at this time to Bishop Seabury by the Rev. William Smith of Stepney Parish, Maryland.<sup>81</sup> He wrote that he had been ordained in Scotland, and had always used the Scottish form of consecration in the communion office: 1st, the Words of Institution; 2nd, the Oblation; and 3rd, the Invocation of the Holy Spirit. Dr. William Smith of Chester wanted him to use the English form, which omitted the Oblation and Invocation.<sup>82</sup> Smith of Stepney Parish, however, insisted on retaining the Scottish form, as more primitive and superior. His position was supported by his parishioners. His was the first voice raised in America for the use of the form of consecration prayer later adopted by the Protestant Episcopal Church of America.

The Proposed Book was well received by the congregation of King's Chapel, Boston, who were already using a revised Prayer Book of their own.<sup>83</sup> It had been authorized by the

<sup>79</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>81</sup> Wm. Smith of Stepney Parish, Maryland, Letter to Seabury, November 5, 1785, in H. R. Gummey, *The Consecration of the Eucharist. A study of the Prayer of Consecration in the Communion Office from the point of view of the alterations and amendments established therein by the Revisers of 1789* (Philadelphia; 1908), pp. 224-226.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. M. H. Shepherd, *The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary* (New York; 1950), p. 76.

<sup>83</sup> *A Liturgy, collected principally from the Book of Common Prayer, for the use of the First Episcopal Church in Boston; together with the Psalter, or Psalms of David* (Boston, 1785). Compiled by James Freeman. [Harvard University Library.]

congregation on February 20, 1785, and had been produced by their pastor, James Freeman, a student lay reader. On March 28, 1785, he had reported his independent revision, and on June 19, 1785, it had been officially adopted by his congregation, the majority of whom were pleased with its Unitarian point of view.<sup>84</sup> On November 12, 1785, Charles Miller, a prominent vestryman, sent a copy of their "reformed liturgy" to Dr. White, asking for his opinion of it.<sup>85</sup>

Dr. White replied to Mr. Miller on December 1, 1785. He was completely unsympathetic with their actions. He began with a statement of his own basic principle:

As our several congregations were parts or members of the Church of England, and have been separated from her by a political revolution, we ought to keep in view the characteristics of that church, in the adapting of our system to our new situation.

This, the congregation of King's Chapel had failed to do. In fact they had broken two of the fundamental principles of the Church of England; "leaving out every invocation of the Redeemer" and "making the alterations of the liturgy a congregational act." The first was a matter of doctrine. White wrote bluntly:

The invoking of the Redeemer has been too conspicuous a part of our services to be set aside by some of us, consistently with any reasonable expectation of continuing of the same communion with the rest.

The second was a matter of polity. To have made the revision of the liturgy a congregational act was "inconsistent with the

<sup>84</sup> During the Revolution, the rector and many members of King's Chapel, being loyalists, had fled to Nova Scotia. A new congregation with a Unitarian bent had rented many of its pews. In 1785, it was still an Episcopal church. Freeman tried several times to be ordained by an Episcopal bishop. (Tiffany, *History*, pp. 368-369.)

<sup>85</sup> Miller, Letter to White, November 12, 1785, in Bird Wilson, *op. cit.*, Appendix II, p. 323.

whole tenor of the ecclesiastical government of the Church of England." To leave each church to its own congregational government

would be foreign to every idea of Episcopal government, which supposes, let the authority of bishops be more or less, that the flock is under a diocesan, and not under congregational discipline. But that this can be the case, and yet each congregation be left to model its liturgy, I cannot conceive possible.

After protesting that the Unitarians in King's Chapel had no right to take the church away from the Episcopal communion, to which the original subscriptions had been given, White returned to his main emphasis. He wrote:

Let me, sir, entreat you to recollect how much more serviceable it will be to the common cause of Christianity, if we can accomplish a great and liberal plan for connecting in one system the members of our widely extended communion; rather than for every congregation to be in all respects self-governed; or, if this cannot be at least continue one in each state.

A long postscript of comments on specific changes, which he approved or disapproved, was added to this letter, and a copy of the Journal of the General Convention was enclosed. Dr. White sent a copy of his letter to Mr. Miller to his friend, Dr. Parker of Boston.

The drastic revisions in the Proposed Book alarmed the Connecticut clergy. As a result of the Convention of 1785, the breach between the ecclesiastical and federal groups was widened.<sup>86</sup> On November 28, 1785, Bishop Seabury wrote to Parker suggesting that one or more bishops be consecrated for the Massachusetts Bay area

<sup>86</sup>For example, cf. the long, critical letter about the Convention written at this time by the Rev. Bela Hubbard of New Haven. (Hubbard, Letter to Peters, November 29, 1785.)

then to let them meet, with a number delegated from the Clergy, and agree upon such revision as shall ensure uniformity among ourselves at least. Our wish and hope then is, that no alterations may at present take place with you, but that you would turn your attention to the procuring another Bishop, to the Eastward, in the course of the next Summer.

Seabury and White both wanted a uniform liturgy for the American Church. These two letters, from the fall of 1785, show their fear of the inevitability of a break, for both suggest trying for uniformity "at least" of a smaller group.

The reaction in England to the proposed revisions was similar to that in Connecticut. Dr. Alexander Murray was so disturbed by the reports he received of the Convention that he wrote two letters in two days to Dr. White from London. On December 24, 1785, he wrote that he

trembled for the consequences, after you have, as it is reported, laid violent hands on the venerable fabric of your Mother Church, which has withstood the attacks of ages, without any material alterations since Elizabeth.

It disturbed Murray particularly, as he believed they could not have chosen for their liturgical revision

a more unseasonable time than when you were applying for a succession of Bishops of our National persuasion, and when you had a Rival Church opening in Connecticut to observe all your motions, and which I suppose has made no alterations in its public Worship, but in the Prayers for the Supreme Magistrate.

On December 26, 1785, Dr. Murray wrote again, with a further expression of his dismay at the action of the Convention:

Had you delay'd your Review, as I strove to persuade you, there is not an Episcopalian in England but would have se-

conded your Request with all their influence and might, but upon your garbled Liturgy they hardly can.

A letter from the Rev. Benjamin Moore of New York to Parker, written December 20, 1785, though critical of the Convention, was less pessimistic. Moore gave a careful summary of all the business transacted by "that heterogeneous Body of Clergy and Laity." He reported on the alterations in the Prayer Book, and on the letter to the English bishops. Lee's letter to Adams made Moore hopeful that consecration might be secured in England. If so, the situation could still be saved. Moore wrote:

They have certainly gone too fast, in framing a new Liturgy, new Articles and in settling a Constitution for the Church, before a Bishop was obtained. The first Step to be taken was to procure a valid and regular Episcopate; & then, our Church being complete, we might have proceeded with Propriety to every necessary Alteration. But it may amount to the same thing, in the end; if a Bishop shall by & by confirm, what others have already prepared to his Hand.

In his letter, Moore made a passing reference to the possibility of trouble because of the animosity felt against Seabury politically. Seabury had not been mentioned at the Convention, the validity of his orders had not been questioned. "Yet," Moore wrote, "I am afraid there is a Party, who on the old Score of Politics, would be glad to throw every possible obstruction in his Way." Moore was an assistant rector to Seabury's most implacable opponent, the Rev. Samuel Provoost of Trinity Church. In the series of letters which he wrote to White, Provoost always called Seabury "Dr. Cebra." Provoost's dislike and distrust of Seabury are evident in the following selections from three of those letters, written the latter part of 1785. On October 25, 1785, Provoost wrote to White:

I have been told that another gentleman has just past thro' this city, on his way to Connecticut for ordination, with recommendations from some Clergymen in Virginia. If private persons continue these recommendations to Dr. Cebra, the validity of whose consecration as a Bishop has neither been acknowledged or discussed in Convention, I fear the bands which united us together at Philadelphia will be converted into a rope of sand.

On November 7, 1785, he wrote:

I expect no obstruction to our Application but what may arise from the Intrigues of the nonjuring Bishop of Connecticut, who a few days since paid a visit to this State (notwithstanding he incurred the guilt of misprison of Treason, and was liable to confinement for life for doing so) . . . On Long Island Dr. Cebra appeared more openly. . . .

Again on December 28, 1785, he wrote:

If we may judge from appearances, Dr. Cebra and his friends are using every art to prevent the success of our application to the English prelates. . . . He certainly would never have run the risque he did by coming to New-York, unless some political ends of consequence were to be answered by it.<sup>87</sup>

Provoost's animosity against Seabury contributed to the widening of the breach between the ecclesiastical and federal groups. By the end of 1785, there seemed little hope of obtaining a unified Episcopal Church in America.

<sup>87</sup> This accusation was based on the fact that Chandler and Seabury were known to correspond with each other, and with their friends in England.

*The Imminence of Schism (1786)*

THE year 1786 began with a threat of schism. Feeling against the Philadelphia Convention was so strong in the ecclesiastical group that there was soon talk of organizing as a separate Church, independent of the federal group. On January 3, 1786, the Rev. Edward Bass, later chosen as the first bishop of Massachusetts, wrote to Dr. Parker on the subject. His disapproval of the "many and weighty alterations," which the Convention had made in the liturgy, led to a blunt statement of his point of view: "I have always been of opinion, that we never should coalesce with these gentry, and that it was much more natural for us to endeavour to come to a uniformity in these four Northern States." He was opposed to sending any delegate to their next Convention, because they had completely ignored Bishop Seabury, an attitude "which I look upon as a great neglect, if not a disrespect to and contempt of the Episcopal Order." That they had failed to make Bishop Seabury the head of their Conventions, he condemned as "truly unepiscopal conduct!" adding: "For my part, I wish to have little to do with them."<sup>1</sup>

At the same time, Bishop Skinner in Aberdeen made the same criticisms and suggestion to the Rev. Jonathan Boucher. On January 4, 1786, he wrote:

<sup>1</sup> Bass, who had not met Seabury, supported him because he had been consecrated. (Bass, Letter to Seabury, March 20, 1786.)

The description you gave of the alarming symptoms appearing in the Southern States, is indeed very affecting, and shows such a miserable deficiency in point of knowledge, as well as zeal, among the Episcopal Clergy in those parts, as could hardly have been suspected among any who had received regular Episcopal Ordination.

Bishop Skinner advised building up the Church in New England. Bishop Seabury he recognized as a great source of strength, "but," he added, "is there no prospect of his getting some fellow-workers of his own order, to assist him in stemming that torrent of irregularity which seems to be pouring down upon him from the Southern States?" He backed up this suggestion by stating, on behalf of the Scottish bishops, that "there is no reason to doubt of their readily concurring in every proper plan for increasing the number of Bishops in America." The way was open for completing the canonical number of bishops in America through the Scottish Episcopacy, and Bishop Skinner believed that "Dr. Seabury must be sufficiently sensible of their good inclinations that way."

That Bishop Seabury's thoughts were traveling in the direction of completing a separate church organization for New England was evident in two letters he wrote in the middle of January. On January 12, 1786, he wrote to Dr. Parker proposing to come to Boston to try to raise money for a church at Middletown, "if you think it practicable, and that my coming to Boston will have any good effect, for I presume they will not be alarmed at the appearance of so harmless a Bishop as I am. . . ." He had a further reason for wanting to see Dr. Parker, however. There had been an unsatisfactory exchange of letters on the subject of another bishop, a matter of such importance to Bishop Seabury that he wanted to discuss it personally with Dr. Parker. The letter continued: "I am sensible of the justness of all your remarks and observations except one, the no necessity of another Bishop in New England. But, like you, I have so



much to say that I must not begin on paper." The second letter was quite different in tone. It was written on January 18, 1786, to Dr. White—a cold, angry letter. In his previous letters to Dr. White, Bishop Seabury had been friendly and conciliatory even when critical, but in this one it was clear that his patience was at an end. The letter began by stating that he had expected to receive a copy of the Journal of the Philadelphia Convention and a letter on the subject from Dr. Smith, but that he had "unhappily been disappointed in both expectations. . . ." As a result he continued:

On the business of your Convention I can at present say nothing, because I know nothing but from report, and that I hope has exaggerated matters; for I should be much afflicted to find all true that is reported.

He could, however, state clearly his own position in the matter of lay representatives. He wrote:

You mention *my disapprobation of your including the Laity in your representative body*. Your extending the power of the lay-delegate, so far as your fundamental rules have done, I did then, and do now, most certainly disapprove of, particularly in the articles relating to the Bishop, who, if I rightly understand, is to be subject to a jurisdiction of presbyters and laymen.

Even the reiteration of his desire for union with the Philadelphia churchmen had a cold and sarcastic sound. He wrote:

I hope the general desire to harmonize which you mention will produce good effects. I assure you no one will endeavor more to effect the cordial union of the Episcopal Church through the Continent than I shall, provided it be on Episcopal principles.

Fortunately, not everyone was as discouraged as Bishop Seabury about the prospects of maintaining a united Church. On January 24, 1786, Dr. Parker wrote a long letter to Dr.

White, stating his criticisms of the Convention in a frank but friendly manner. Dr. Parker began by acknowledging the receipt of various packets containing reports of the Convention, copies of sermons, and sheets giving the revision of the Prayer Book, as far as it had been completed. He was jubilant that White had handled the matter of King's Chapel as he had. Parker wrote:

I have also to return you my sincere thanks for your most excellent Letter to Mr. Miller & for your politeness in giving me the perusal of it before delivery. It was not a little mortification to them that your Letter came thro my hands, for I have so uniformly opposed their proceedings that I have exposed myself to their resentment & this afforded me such matter of Triumph as they could hardly brook. I think you have given your Opinion of their Book in a very sensible Judicious manner & shew them their error with great Strength of Arguments.

Though Parker felt certain there would be no retraction as long as James Freeman remained with the Church, he hoped that the way would be opened for the minority, who had remained sound Episcopalians, to recover the possession of the elegant church building.

On this basis of mutual understanding, Parker proceeded to criticize the liturgical revisions of the Philadelphia Convention. Though they were similar to those suggested at Boston, there were differences to which Parker objected. In the first place, the Philadelphia revision violated the principle, agreed to in New York, that the American Church should maintain the doctrines and the liturgy of the Church of England. Furthermore their procedure had been incorrect. They had acted without the authority of a bishop, though

the business of revising Liturgies & framing ecclesiastical Constitutions is the sole and proper duty of Bishops with advice of their Clergy, & that for the Clergy & Laity to undertake this is

entrenching upon the Episcopal Authority in matters ecclesiastical.

The Philadelphia Convention had used their proposed revisions and had ordered them published, as though they were final. The Boston convention had followed the correct procedure:

Certain alterations were proposed in the Liturgy of the Church by the Bishop of Connecticut & at his request lay before the Convention at Boston for their Approbation, & those were made the basis of our proceedings, but when approved were not to be adopted till the other Churches had approved of them also, in order if possible to obtain a Uniformity. And accordingly we have not yet made any Alterations except a Substitute for the State Prayers.

Parker protested the application of the Convention to the English Archbishops, asking whether "if you succeed in Consequence of said address in obtaining an Episcopate from England, we shall not inevitably have two Episcopal Churches in America which like Jews and Samaritans will have no Communication but be at continual Enmity?" The people of Massachusetts were still fearful of any English authority, civil or ecclesiastical, and also there was a bishop of the Scottish succession nearby.

His final criticism concerned the creeds. He objected to dropping both the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds from the liturgy, because Arianism was gaining ground, and "throwing out two Creeds at once which were designed as a barrier ag't. that Doctrine will be looked upon by many as acceding to the same Opinions." The letter closed with a friendly emphasis. Parker had stated his opinions candidly, and hoped that White would be

kind enough to put the most favourable Construction on my Expressions, & not imagine that I presume to find fault with doings

of so learned and respectable a Body but only to inform you of such Difficulties as lay in my mind respecting our ecclesiastical Affairs.

He ended with his sincere wish that "we may settle down in an Uniformity of Doctrine & Worship, & still continue one Church cemented in the strictest bonds of Union. To the obtaining of which I shall exert my utmost Abilities."

On February 1, 1786, Dr. White made an effort to improve the relations between the two church groups, by writing a conciliatory letter to Bishop Seabury. In the letter, Seabury was addressed as "R. Rev'd. Father in God," a tacit acknowledgment of the validity of his consecration. White apologized for being so late in sending the bishop the Journal of the Convention and the sheets of the Proposed Prayer Book, which, he explained, he thought had been sent by Dr. Smith. In the matter of lay representation, White saw a possibility of agreement. He pointed out that the Convention had taken no action as to the mode of trying clergymen, the question with which the bishop was most concerned. Dr. White then gave his own opinion as follows:

If I am rightly instructed in what w'd be proper on such a Subject, ye Method may vary according to local Circumstances; and altho' there may be nothing incongruous for Laymen to have some Part in that Matter, yet ye m[inisteria]l character should not be taken away but by that higher Order of Clergy who convey it.

After thus reassuring Bishop Seabury on the subject of episcopal authority, Dr. White undertook to interpret the Convention in terms with which the bishop could agree. He wrote:

They may have erred for want of suff't. Information, but I am confident it was not their Design to depart from Episcopal'n

Principles, and that they wished to maintain what appeared to be such from ye System of ye Ch of England only accomodating them to local circumstances in such matters as it cannot be supposed involved Principles.

This courteous and sincere reply to Bishop Seabury's cold note undoubtedly served to improve the relations of the two leaders, and it may have been one factor in slowing down the movement for a separate union of the New England churches.<sup>2</sup>

During the first three months of 1786, the prospects for the successful culmination of the federal plan of reorganization were increased. The center of interest shifted from Philadelphia to England, as the next and last stop for the federal group was to procure three bishops consecrated in the English succession. They continued to try to break down the political opposition in England by getting American government officials to approach the archbishops unofficially.

On January 3, 1786, John Adams called by appointment on the Archbishop of Canterbury, telling him

that at the desire of two very respectable characters in America, the late president of congress and the present secretary of state for the department of foreign affairs, I had the honour to be the bearer to his grace of a letter from a convention of delegates from the Episcopal Churches in the most southern states. . . . That in this business, however, I acted in no official character, having no instructions from congress, nor indeed from the convention; but that I thought it most respectful to them, as well as to his grace, to present the letter in person.

The archbishop read the letters from Richard Henry Lee and John Jay at once, expressed his pleasure at their in-

<sup>2</sup>During the summer, the Rev. Jacob Duché wrote to Dr. White: "I am happy to hear, that you maintain a friendly Correspondence with Bishop Seabury: you give me some Dawn of Hope, that there will be no Schism on his Account." (Duché, Letter to White, August 12, 1786. [N. Y. Hist. Soc.]

terest, and then asked Mr. Adams "whether the interposition of the English bishops would not give uneasiness and dissatisfaction in America?" Mr. Adams, speaking only as a private citizen, gave the archbishop a vigorous reassurance on this subject. His grace was apparently convinced, for he commented that "he hoped the characters which should be recommended, would be good ones."<sup>3</sup>

A letter to White from Duché, written January 30, 1786, made it clear that the chief difficulty in obtaining an English consecration had become the doubts felt by the English bishops about the alterations in the liturgy in the Proposed Prayer Book. Duché, too, had called on the Archbishop of Canterbury in the interests of the American Church, but had been unable to answer his inquiries about the alterations, as no official information had been received, only comments in private letters. He had done his best to reassure the archbishop, but it was evident that Duché himself was worried, for he wrote:

I feel a sincere anxiety for your Spiritual as well as temporal welfare and therefore hope you have cautiously avoided any thing that may be construed as an essential Deviation from the long received Doctrines of the Church of England, and may have any Tendency to widen the Separation from our Church here.

Another person, who continued to press the archbishop to consecrate American candidates, was Granville Sharp. An extract from a letter he wrote to the archbishop, on February 17, 1786, has been preserved in the appendix to White's *Memoirs*. Sharp discussed the "great fears about the propriety of the alterations they have made in the liturgy." Critical as he was of their action, Sharp did not believe that the changes in the liturgy should be allowed to interfere with the consecration of a worthy candidate. In the first place, he told the archbishop that Dr. Smith claimed to have based the

<sup>3</sup> Adams, Letter to R. H. Lee, January 4, 1786.

alterations on those proposed in England in 1689, which had been supported by Sharp's grandfather, then Archbishop of York. Sharp admitted he was puzzled; he knew, he said, of

a *short* general account of that business . . . but I never heard that the transactions at length were ever printed; and therefore am surprised to find that the convention at Philadelphia had a full account of that important business before them for their guidance.

The main point, however, that he wanted to make, was that alterations in the liturgy

need not be held forth as a ground of objection against the candidates for consecration, if in other respects the candidates themselves shall be found *unexceptionable*, and should readily profess a sound and unequivocal belief in the fundamental articles of our faith.

Therefore, he suggested that the English bishops refer to the omission of the creeds from the liturgy, not as a reason for refusing the American request, but as the reason for warning them to be sure to choose candidates of sound belief, "particularly in the scriptural doctrine of the Holy Trinity."

The answer of the English prelates to the delegates of the Philadelphia Convention was sent from London on February 24, 1786. The tone was friendly and encouraging. It was evident that the bishops wanted to send an affirmative answer, but their sense of responsibility to the Church of England made them move cautiously. They wrote frankly:

We are now able to assure you, that nothing is nearer to our hearts than the wish to promote your spiritual welfare, to be instrumental in procuring for you the complete exercise of our holy religion, and the enjoyment of that ecclesiastical constitution, which we believe to be truly apostolical, and for which you express so unreserved a veneration.

They expressed their satisfaction that the civil powers in America would not disapprove the introduction of an American Episcopate, adding that they had good reason to hope that they could acquire the necessary legal action in Britain. The obstacle that kept them from giving a positive answer was their uncertainty as to the alterations which had been made in the liturgy, of which they had heard only through "private and less certain channels." Before taking any further action, they would await an explanation. The issue by this time had become purely ecclesiastical, but, they explained:

we cannot but be extremely cautious, lest we should be the instruments of establishing an ecclesiastical system which will be called a branch of the Church of England, but afterwards may possibly appear to have departed from it essentially, either in doctrine or discipline.

The English bishops sent a copy of their letter directly to Mr. Adams, asking him to send it to Philadelphia, because, if duplicates were sent, there might be "a better chance of the early arrival of one of them."

That there was increasing hope of securing consecration for American candidates was further evidenced in a letter from the Rev. Richard Peters to Dr. White written March 4, 1786. He gave a full account of an interview he had had the previous day with the Archbishop of Canterbury. The English bishops were waiting to be fully informed of all the changes that had been made in the liturgy. Some alterations were obviously necessary, but, the archbishop had said

he hoped there would be found none which rendered our Church substantially different from theirs, of which he considered it as a branch, and the bishops were obliged to examine what Church ours was, before, from their source, they established an Episcopacy over a people, who might hold tenets opposite to theirs.



He had stressed that their answer "had been sincerely *felt* by every bishop . . . and must evidence, beyond a doubt, the great desire all had to grant our request." The legal difficulties in England no longer were an obstacle. The archbishop had spoken to the king and had been assured "that administration would promote the law, when it was recommended by the bishops as proper." The full responsibility now rested with the bishops. Therefore, he continued

he hoped our convention, at the next meeting, would consider the embarrassments too many alterations would throw in the way of their application here, and if any of them substantially deviated from the doctrines or worship of this Church, it would frustrate the views of our Churches, by putting it out of the power of those here, who have every good disposition to serve us, to forward our application.

On one matter the archbishop had refused to commit himself. When questioned about the validity of Scottish consecrations, at Dr. White's request, he had declined to answer.<sup>4</sup> Summing up the interview, Dr. Peters concluded: "I find we can have no bishop, until we let the prelates here see what Church we have made. I think it would be prudent in our Church to put off any material alterations until we have bishops consecrated."

One week later, the Rev. Alexander Murray also wrote a letter addressed to Dr. White and Dr. Smith. He began with excited encouragement:

I would fain hope the day is not far distant when I shall have the honour of addressing you Right Reverend. . . . Mr. Adams has finally obviated all political objections to your Application,

<sup>4</sup>White, *Memoirs*, p. 332. White added the following footnote: "Notwithstanding the prudent reserve of the archbishop at this time, he is said to have given his influence in favour of the non-juring bishops, about three years afterwards. . . ."

and reconciled the King, the Members, and the whole Bench of Bishops to it.

Murray then proceeded to warn his friends that the proposed alterations must not be adopted as they stood. The English bishops were prepared to approve the political alterations already ratified, but no more. They were worried about the soundness of doctrine of the Philadelphia Convention. Murray wrote: "What chiefly gives offence here is your omitting the two Creeds, and at the same time the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity runs thro' the whole of that part of your service I have yet seen." On the strength of the latter observation, he told the archbishop that "your Formulary tho' altered contained still the sum and substance of ours and nothing repugnant in Doctrine, Worship or Government, but in what respected the separate civil powers of your country." He concluded his letter with an admonition:

As there are none but political alterations yet agreed upon, pray postpone the most exceptionable of the rest to a future day, when you can discuss them in an Episcopal Convention, with decency, order, and consistently with your profession of Prelacy.

Although the danger of radical liturgical revisions was uppermost in the minds of most of Dr. White's friends in England, the Rev. Jacob Duché was aware of another danger which threatened the Church in America. On March 25, 1786, he wrote his former assistant that he could not "but lament the Prospect there seems to be of so Early a Schism among you." Though it had been impossible to recognize Seabury's consecration in England, Duché could not understand why, in America, a study of its validity had not been made from the proofs brought back from Scotland. He continued:

This once settled, I should think you might receive him, or at least enable him, by previously acknowledging his Episcopal Character, to join your General Convention, and assist you, and your future Bishops, (from whatever Channel you may obtain them) in making such further Regulations in Discipline and Worship, as may finally introduce a General Uniformity in the Episcopal Church throughout the States. If something of this Kind is not done I fear, an unpleasant Disunion may take Place, and put a Stop to ye Progress of your Church.

Those in England, who were fearful lest White would fail to remain true to the doctrines of the Church of England, would have been heartened by his final correspondence with Mr. Miller. In January, 1786, Mr. Miller had replied to White's first letter with a long defense of the liturgical revisions adopted at King's Chapel.<sup>5</sup> After the failure of the New York Convention to undertake Prayer Book reform, Miller wrote that their congregation had felt it necessary to remove trinitarian errors from the liturgy. Though Unitarian in doctrine, they preferred to remain in the Episcopal Church, "as they maintained the expediency of Episcopal ordination, which they conceived to be the most essential article of an Episcopal Church." Their plan of unity was to use a liturgy that would offend no one:

The object of our society in our new liturgy was to leave out all such expressions as wound the conscience of a unitarian, without introducing any which would displease a trinitarian. . . . A multitude of different opinions may be entertained by Christians who conscientiously use the same liturgy.

They were willing to use the Prayer Book proposed at Philadelphia in place of their own, if it were understood that they would omit and suppress the trinitarian parts. Mr. Miller

<sup>5</sup> Miller, Letter to White, January 8, 1786.

admitted that the congregational revision of the Prayer Book had been contrary to episcopal practice, but said that the pursuit of truth had required it. In answer to White's protest that they had no moral right to take over the church building, Miller replied that the church belonged, not to those who had originally subscribed to build it, but to those who were paying pew rents. Any who were discontented could sell their pews. In completely rejecting Miller's church doctrines, White showed his desire, in a letter written in March, to maintain the beliefs of the Church of England. He could not believe that an entire congregation would suddenly change from trinitarian to unitarian. While agreeing that individuals could change their church allegiance, White insisted that the Church itself must stand for positive beliefs. Such a stand was not intolerant, for

a Church may adhere to what she conceives to be of substance of Christian doctrine, and require it in all her members, without the least uncharitableness towards those who are not willing, on her conditions, to be of the number.

He then clearly stated the principle on which the Episcopal Church in America would act in all revisions made. He said that any changes must not be "contrary to what appears, from the institutions and the conduct of the Church of England, to be her sense of the essential doctrines of the Gospel," and must be only "in what the same Church has declared to be matters subject to change."

During the spring of 1786, five state conventions were held to discuss the alterations in the Prayer Book proposed at Philadelphia. The first was in Maryland, an account of which was sent to Parker in a letter by Dr. Smith, on April 17, 1786. Dr. Smith wrote that the alterations proposed in Boston had been the basis for the revisions suggested by the General Convention, which

agreed with you almost in every matter, except only respecting the Nicene Creed, and our Convention in Maryland, which met last week, have recommended the restoring that Creed also, so that either it or the Apostle's may be read at discretion, provided both be not used in *one* Service.

The Maryland convention proposed a new revision: the addition of a prayer of invocation in the prayer of consecration in the Holy Communion, analogous to that in the liturgy of Edward VI and in the Scottish liturgy. The Rev. William Smith of Stepney Parish had brought the convention, including Dr. William Smith, to his point of view. Dr. Smith explained to Parker that the prayer of invocation "was left out at the first review of the English Liturgy, it is said, at the instance of *Bucer*, and otherwise: because the Invocation favoured the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*." The prayer in the Scottish liturgy, that the elements "*become the body and blood*," the Maryland convention proposed be changed to a prayer to God: "with Thy Word and Holy Spirit vouchsafe to bless and sanctify these Thy Creatures of Bread and Wine." This amendment was approved by Dr. Smith, as "it perfectly satisfies such of our Clergy and people as were attached to the Scots' and other ancient Liturgies, all of which have an Invocation of a blessing on the Elements, as is, indeed, most reasonable and proper." In conclusion, Dr. Smith wrote of the Proposed Book: "We can only in the different States receive the book for temporary use, till our Churches are organized, and the book comes again under review of Conventions having their Bishops, &c., as the primitive rules of Episcopacy require."

Conventions were also held at this time in South Carolina and Virginia. The South Carolina churchmen convened twice. On April 26, 1786, they met to read the minutes of the General Convention of 1785.<sup>6</sup> A discussion of the proposed

<sup>6</sup> "South Carolina Journals," in Dalcho, *op. cit.*, pp. 467-73.

constitution followed. On May 29, 1786, they met again to discuss the proposed liturgical revisions. No bishop was elected for South Carolina.<sup>7</sup> In Virginia, the main business of the convention of May 3, 1786, was the election of Dr. David Griffith as bishop-elect of that state.<sup>8</sup>

At the New Jersey convention,<sup>9</sup> the minutes of the General Convention of 1785 were carefully studied, and the findings of the group were drawn up in the form of a memorial, which was sent to Dr. White to be presented at the coming General Convention.<sup>10</sup> The memorial began by listing the actions of the Philadelphia Convention of which the New Jersey group approved: the new state prayers, the plan for obtaining consecration of bishops for America, and the letter to the English bishops. But the New Jersey group had many misgivings. They wrote that

they doubt the right of any order or orders of men in an Episcopal Church, without a bishop, to make any alterations not warranted by immediate necessity; especially such as not only go to the mode of its worship, but also to its doctrines.

Furthermore, they disapproved of the haste in which the revisions had been made, without due consideration of "the prejudices and prepossessions of mankind in favour of old customs." Though they did not disapprove of all the changes

they were very apprehensive, that until alterations can be made consistent with the customs of the primitive Church, and with

<sup>7</sup> According to the Rev. Henry Purcell, the resolution not to have a bishop in South Carolina was "the opinion of 19 in 20." (Quoted in Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 307.)

<sup>8</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 144, footnote.

<sup>9</sup> For the minutes of the New Jersey meeting, cf. *Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New Jersey: Including the first three meetings.* (Trenton, 1787), pp. 7-14.

<sup>10</sup> "A memorial from the Convention in New Jersey, to the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America, to be held in the City of Philadelphia in June next," in White, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-300.

the rules of the Church of England, from which it is our boast to have descended, a ratification of them would create great uneasiness in the minds of many members of the Church, and in great probability cause dissensions and schism. Although they do not disapprove of all the alterations made in the said new book, yet they have to regret the unseasonableness and irregularity of them.

In conclusion, they urged the General Convention, soon to meet, to revise their proceedings, in order to

remove every cause that may have excited jealousy or fear, that the Episcopal Church in the United States of America have any intention or desire essentially to depart, either in doctrine or discipline, from the Church of England; but, on the contrary, to convince the world that it is their wish and intention, to maintain the doctrines of the Gospel as now held by the Church of England, and to adhere to the liturgy of the said Church as far as shall be consistent with the American revolution, and the constitution of the respective states. . . .

This memorial, written by Dr. Chandler and signed by the Rev. Abraham Beach as president of the New Jersey convention, played an important part in the General Convention of June, 1786.<sup>11</sup>

Two conventions were held in New York in preparation for the coming General Convention. On May 17, 1786, six clergy and seventeen laymen convened to read the minutes of the Convention of 1785, and to discuss the Proposed Book.<sup>12</sup> Without taking any action, the meeting adjourned to June 12, 1786, "in expectation of a more numerous meeting." On May 20, 1786, Provoost wrote White that this meeting had adjourned to June 18, "in expectation of a more numerous meeting." In the same letter he told White of a topic

<sup>11</sup> White, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-300. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>12</sup> *Proceedings of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of New-York* (New York, 1787), pp. 5-6.

which had been discussed at the May convention, though not officially recorded: the fact that White had recently closed his churches to the Rev. Joseph Pilmore, who had been ordained by Bishop Seabury. Provoost wrote:

Your best friends in this City approve of your conduct in not admitting persons ordained by Dr. Cebra to your pulpit. The Clergy in N. Jersey act with the same precaution. Mr. Sprague and Mr. Rowe were not to be received as members of their Convention.

There was no question in Provoost's mind of the correctness of White's act. As the Archbishop of Canterbury had refused to answer the direct, private inquiry as to the validity of Seabury's consecration, and

As the General Convention did not think proper to acknowledge Dr. Cebra as a Bishop, much less a Bishop of our Church, it would be highly improper for us in our own private Capacities to give any sanction to his Ordinations. It would also be an insult upon the Church and to the truly venerable prelates to whom we are now making Application for the Succession.

Provoost admitted that his opposition to Seabury had a political basis; he distrusted the non-jurors, "whose slavish and absurd Tenets were a disgrace to humanity, and *God grant* that they may never be cherished in America which as my native Country I wish may always be saved to Liberty both civil and religious."

On June 10, 1786, Provoost again wrote to White, saying that, if he had sufficient influence at the coming New York Convention, their delegates would be instructed to oppose Bishop Seabury. He wrote:

Strong objections, in my opinion, may be made against the validity of the Nonjuring consecrations in general, and stronger still against Dr. Cebra's, in particular. . . . The line of conduct



our delegates are to observe towards the persons ordained by the Doctor will, I hope be pointed out to them before they go to Philadelphia.

Nor was he disappointed. The New York convention of June 12-13, 1786, had many items of business to cover. The proposed church constitution was discussed and adopted, with an amendment to Article 8, making the bishop "amenable to the authority of the General Convention."<sup>13</sup> The letter from the English bishops was read, and, because of it, action on the Proposed Book was postponed. Provoost was then elected to seek consecration in England as Bishop of New York. The final resolution of the meeting was directed against Bishop Seabury, as follows: "Resolved, that the persons appointed to represent this Church be instructed not to consent to any act that may imply the validity of Dr. Seabury's ordinations."

Early in June, two letters were sent to White from England, urging discretion. On June 6, 1786, the Rev. Charles Inglis wrote from London, reporting very exactly on the attitude of the English bishops at that moment. He said that, having received the whole of the Proposed Book, they were relieved to find "that the great essential Doctrines of Christianity are preserved; particularly, the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity and our Saviour's Atonement," and that, as a result, "they have taken up the Business with greater Zeal." Before agreeing to consecrate the American candidates, however, the English bishops were imposing four conditions, which they were sending to Dr. White to be presented at the coming General Convention. These Inglis proceeded to state and to support. Three of the conditions presented no great difficulty. A clamor had already been raised in the States in support of the first two: the restoration of the phrase "He descended to Hell," and the restoration of the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, "so far at least as to leave the use of them Discre-

<sup>13</sup> Proceedings of the New York Convention, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

tional." No trouble was to be expected from the fourth condition either, which required proper testimonials for each candidate, as to his learning, moral character, and "Soundness in the Faith."

It was the third condition that Inglis feared might cause trouble. It concerned the

securing to the future Bishops that just and permanent Authority, which is not only necessary for the right Discharge of their Duty and Benefit of the Church; but which is warranted by Holy Scripture and Practice of the Christian Church in every Period of its Existence.

Inglis was shocked by the lack of authority granted to bishops at the Philadelphia Convention. He wrote:

When I first saw the Regulations made on this Head, I was astonished how any People professing themselves Members of an Episcopal Church, could think of degrading their Bishop in such a Manner. No Episcopal Power whatever is reserved for him but that of *Ordination*, and perhaps *Confirmation*. He is only a *Member ex officio*, of the Convention where he resides, but is not to take the Chair or Preside, unless he is asked; whereas such *Presidency* is as essential to his Character as *Ordination*.

He was relieved to find that the regulation had passed because of the vote of the laity, as "it is only one of the Evils which I foresaw would attend the Introduction of so many Laymen into Conventions; and be assured it will be followed by many others." Lest the Americans argue that there was a civil necessity for limiting the bishop's authority in the States, Inglis wrote:

The Authority of Bishops, as such, is purely spiritual, it has nothing to do with Civil Constitutions, or their different Forms. . . . It is therefore idle to say, that because the American States

are Republics, therefore the Bishops residing in them must be stripped of their spiritual or ecclesiastical Powers.

In conclusion, Inglis said that the English bishops realized that they had no right to interpose in any authoritative way, but could "only admonish and advise." However, when they did this "in Matters which are for your Benefit, and which are necessary to enable them to serve you, consistently with their Duty and Conscience, their advice should have great weight."

On June 8, 1786, the Rev. Alexander Murray wrote to White, also urging him to comply with the wishes of the bishops, for the sake of maintaining the connection between the American and English Church. He said:

They are your Fathers in God still, and you owe them all due attention and submission as such though they have no longer any Jure jurisdiction over you. . . . An overruling Providence has determined that, for good and wise ends, yet unknown to us, but the Unity of the Church is not—cannot be dissolved thereby, but remains unalterably the same under all the changes and chances of the Kingdoms of this World; so that your Church and ours must still continue in Unity, so long as they profess the same religious principles. . . .

On June 20, 1786, the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church convened in Philadelphia with representatives from the same seven states that had attended the previous year: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina.<sup>14</sup> Before the meeting ended, twenty-six delegates were seated: fourteen clergymen and twelve laymen. Of these, only eight of the

<sup>14</sup> W. S. Perry (ed.), *A Half Century of the Legislation of the American Church, Vol. I. Journals of General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the United States, 1785-1821* (Claremont, N. H., 1874), 31-46. Hereinafter referred to as Perry, *Journals I*. This is the source of all that follows about the first Convention, except where otherwise noted.

clergy and three of the laymen had attended the previous Convention. Maryland was the only state with no lay delegates. The Rev. Joseph Pilmore, whom Dr. White had refused to invite to his pulpit, was present with the Pennsylvania delegation. The first two days were uneventful. One day was spent waiting for more delegates to arrive. On the next day the meeting was opened with divine service and a sermon by Dr. White, followed by the presentation of testimonials to establish that each of the representatives had been duly appointed. On the third day, June 22, 1786, the potentially explosive character of the gathering became evident. Writing in retrospect of this meeting, Dr. White summarized it as follows:

The convention assembled under circumstances, which bore strong appearances of a dissolution of the union, in this early stage of it. The interfering instructions from the churches in the different states—the embarrassment that had arisen from the rejection of the proposed book in some states, and the use of it in others—some dissatisfaction on account of the Scottish Episcopacy—and, added to these, the demur expressed in the letter from the English bishops, were what the most sanguine contemplated with apprehension, and were sure prognostics of our falling to pieces, in the opinion of some, who were dissatisfied with the course that had been taken for the organizing of the Church.<sup>15</sup>

The business session began with the election of the Rev. David Griffith as president and the Hon. Francis Hopkinson as secretary. Immediately, a motion was made by the Rev. Robert Smith of South Carolina, and seconded: "That the Clergy present produce their Letters of Orders, or declare by whom they were ordained." In his account of the Convention, White explained that this motion was directed particularly at two of the clergy present: the Rev. Joseph Pil-

<sup>15</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

more, who had been ordained by Bishop Seabury, and the Rev. William Smith of Stepney Parish, who had been ordained in the Scottish Church.<sup>16</sup> In order to suppress certain altercation, the Rev. Dr. Smith moved the previous question, seconded by Dr. White: "Whether this question shall now be put?" Discussion was prevented, a vote taken, and the motion of Robert Smith defeated. The letter from the English bishops was then read, and resolutions of thanks and of reassurances that there was to be no essential deviation from the Church of England were passed. A committee was appointed to draft an answer.

Again, the calm was broken; Dr. Provoost was still determined to get an anti-Seabury resolution from the Convention. He moved (seconded by Robert Smith) "That this Convention will resolve to do no act that shall imply the validity of ordinations made by Dr. Seabury." Once more Dr. Smith moved the previous question, seconded by Dr. White. Discussion was prevented and Dr. Provoost's motion was defeated. New York, South Carolina, and New Jersey voted in favor of the anti-Seabury motion, the other four states voted against it. It seemed to Dr. White that part of the difficulty lay in the fear, which was in the minds of some, that the men ordained in the Scottish succession were under canonical subjection of the bishop who ordained them, "although Mr. Pilmore denied that any such thing had been exacted of him."<sup>17</sup> Therefore, though "he never conceived of there having been any ground for it, other than in the apprehension which had been expressed," Dr. White made the following motion:

That it be recommended to this Church in the States here represented not to receive to the pastoral charge, within their respective limits, Clergymen professing canonical subjection to

<sup>16</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>17</sup> White, *op. cit.*

any Bishop, in any State or country, other than those Bishops who may be duly settled in the States represented in this Convention.

This guarded motion was passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned to the following morning.

When the Convention reconvened, June 23, 1786, the Rev. Robert Smith was ready with a new and more circumspect anti-Seabury motion. He moved:

That it be recommended to the Conventions of the Church, represented in this General Convention, not to admit any person as a Minister within their respective limits, who shall receive ordination from any Bishop residing in America, during the application now pending to the English Bishops for Episcopal consecration.

This motion was passed unanimously.

The regular business of the Convention was then begun with the reading of the Journals of the previous Convention. These contained the proposed constitution and the resolutions passed concerning liturgical revisions, which were known to be a potential source of disunion. Therefore, "previous to a second reading," and before there was any discussion, "a Memorial from the Convention of the Church in the State of New Jersey was presented, and sundry communications from the Conventions in other States were made, relative to the business of this Convention." The result of this procedure was highly satisfactory. No one knew better than Dr. White what conflicting instructions the various delegates had received in regard to the Proposed Book. It was he who cut off controversial discussion before it ever began, with the motion: "That the said Memorial and communications be referred to the first General Convention which shall assemble with sufficient powers to determine on the same; and that in the meantime they be lodged with the Secretary."

The official records contain no further comment on the matter, but Dr. White had more to say. In commenting on the success of the motion in silencing the "interfering instructions," he added the following interesting observation:

The instructions, far from proving injurious, had the contrary effect; by showing, as well the necessity of a duly constituted ecclesiastical body, as the futility of taking measures, to be reviewed and authoritatively judged of, in the bodies of which we were the deputies. Such a system appeared so evidently fruitful of discord and disunion, that it was abandoned from this time.<sup>18</sup>

The success in avoiding controversy at this point was no accident but the result of careful planning. Dr. White recorded the fact that he "had contemplated the meeting of the interfering instructions with the motion recorded as his own on the journal, and was especially pleased with the effect of it—the silence of unnecessary discussion."<sup>19</sup> In summarizing the results of the Convention as a whole, Dr. White pointed out the good effects of reading the New Jersey Memorial. In the first place, "it must have convinced them, that the result of considerable changes would have been the disunion of the Church." The moderate tone of the letter, "approving some of the proceedings of the late General Convention; but censuring others, and soliciting a change of counsels in those particulars," made it "among the causes which prevented the disorganizing of it [the American Church]."

Having successfully silenced debate on liturgical revision, and recognizing the need of a duly constituted governing body, the Convention proceeded to a second reading of the proposed constitution, with a paragraph by paragraph discussion of its contents. Actually, there was rather general agreement about it, and the constitution was passed with only a few amendments. Two of these, proposed by Dr. White and

<sup>18</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.* See also pp. 119 and 120.

seconded by Dr. Beach, had to do with the status of a bishop in the American Church. In Section V, after the statement that a bishop was to be considered a member of the Convention *ex officio*, was added "and a Bishop shall always preside in the General Convention, if any of the Episcopal Order be present." Dr. White had acted as promptly as possible on Dr. Inglis' advice. The other amendment reflected Dr. White's correspondence with Bishop Seabury on the matter of the trial of a bishop. The following words were added to Section VIII:

And at every trial of a Bishop, there shall be one or more of the Episcopal Order present; and none but a Bishop shall pronounce sentence of deposition or degradation from the Ministry on any Clergy, whether Bishop, or Presbyterian, or Deacon.

Three other amendments accepted should be noted: (1) making the use of the Proposed Prayer Book voluntary until official action was taken; (2) requiring stringent moral qualifications for candidates to the ministry, with a brief statement of loyalty to the American Church; and (3) making the constitution under discussion, once ratified, unalterable by any state convention. The constitution, as amended, was unanimously accepted.<sup>20</sup>

The last three days of the Convention were devoted to replying to the English bishops. On Saturday morning, June 24, 1786, the draft of an answer was presented to the Convention for consideration, but no action was taken on it.<sup>21</sup> The rest of the session was spent in passing resolutions: two as expressions of thanks, and two to set up a Committee of Correspondence. The most significant one, from the point of view of the developing concept of the Church, was the first resolution offered: it was recommended that the state con-

<sup>20</sup> Perry, *Journals I*, 40-42. Constitution, as agreed to, given in full.

<sup>21</sup> The original draft is given in full in Perry, *Hist. Notes*, pp. 314-315.



ventions authorize their delegates to the next General Convention to ratify a general constitution regulating the doctrine and discipline of the Church in America, "after we shall have obtained a Bishop or Bishops in our Church."<sup>22</sup>

When the Convention reconvened on Sunday afternoon, a new delegate from New York was present, the Hon. John Jay, whose personal letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury had already proved influential. In his opinion, the reply to the bishops under consideration was too submissive.<sup>23</sup> He and the Hon. Francis Hopkinson were added to the committee to which the letter was returned for revision.<sup>24</sup> The following morning the revised answer was presented, approved, and signed by all the delegates.<sup>25</sup> It was an excellent letter, courteous but strong, affirming their loyalty to the Church of England and also their right to make the needed liturgical revisions. A prompt reply was requested, as some of the states had already chosen their candidates for consecration. With the letter, as a proof of their fidelity to the Church of England, they sent copies of the proposed constitution and Prayer Book. In his *Memoirs*, White commented:

This second application went with no small advantage, from the alterations made in the constitution, before the receiving of the objections made against it, on the part of the English Bishops. . . . In the preceding year, the points alluded to were determined on with too much warmth, and without investigation proportioned to the importance of the subjects. The decisions of that day were now reversed—not to say without a division, but—without even an opposition.<sup>26</sup>

No further action was possible until word came from England. Before adjourning *sine die*, the Convention empow-

<sup>22</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, I, 42.

<sup>23</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

<sup>24</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45. Letter given in full.

<sup>26</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 117.

ered the Committee of Correspondence, to whom the English answer would be sent, to call a General Convention at Wilmington, Delaware, "whenever a majority of the said Committee shall think it necessary."<sup>27</sup>

The answering letter from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York contained various enclosures. The archbishops explained that the apparent delay on their part had been due to the fact that the information from America had not been received in full until the end of April. They continued:

The whole of your communications was then, with as little delay as possible, taken into consideration, at a meeting of the archbishops and fifteen of the bishops, being all who were then in London and able to attend.<sup>28</sup>

They objected to some of the liturgical revisions proposed in America, especially the dropping of the two creeds, and the phrase, "He descended into hell." Nevertheless, they had prepared a bill to present to Parliament, which would empower them to consecrate candidates from the States. "Full satisfaction on the sufficiency of the persons recommended," however, would be necessary. In England, before a man was admitted to the ministry, he was examined on proficiency of learning, soundness in the faith, and virtuous living. Public notice was given of each coming ordination, and a solemn call made for anyone who knew of any impediment to declare it. These precautions were not repeated at the consecration of a bishop in England, but something similar seemed advisable before the English bishops could consecrate a stranger from a distant land. As for the matter of adequate learning they were prepared to take it for granted. In the matter of faith, they were willing to accept the candidate's subscrip-

<sup>27</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

<sup>28</sup> The English Archbishops, Letter to the Committee of the General Convention at Philadelphia, undated, but received shortly before their next letter dated July 4, 1786.

tion to the statement required in the tenth article of the proposed constitution, though they felt strongly that the creeds, and the phrase from the Apostles' Creed, should be restored to the liturgy. They also protested the "degradation of the Clerical, and still more of the Episcopal character" in the eight article of the first draft of the ecclesiastical constitution. In respect to the moral qualifications of the candidates, testimonials would be required from the General and state conventions, for which forms were enclosed. White recorded the fact that these testimonials met with great satisfaction, especially the one to be signed by the General Convention, as the English requirement removed one of the American difficulties. He explained that the General Convention

had not been without their apprehensions, that some unsuitable character, as to morals, might be elected: and yet, for them to have assumed a control, might have been an improper interference with the churches in the individual states. What was demanded by the archbishops, went to the point in the general wish; and yet, was not to be complained of or evaded by any individual.<sup>29</sup>

A few days later, White received a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury, addressed to the Committee of the General Convention, enclosing a copy of the act of Parliament by which the English bishops were granted the authority to consecrate candidates from "countries out of his Majesty's Dominions."<sup>30</sup> In it, special permission was given to consecrate candidates for foreign countries without requiring the oaths of allegiance and supremacy to the king, or the oath of obedience to the archbishop. The act required that the archbishops should be assured of the suitability of

<sup>29</sup> White, *op. cit.*, pp. 120-121.

<sup>30</sup> Archbishop of Canterbury, Letter to the Committee of General Convention, July 4, 1786, and the enclosed copy of the Enabling Act, passed by Parliament, June 26, 1786.

each candidate, and should apply for a special license in each case. No one so consecrated, and no man ordained by a bishop so consecrated, would ever be permitted to officiate in any part of his majesty's dominions. In his brief covering note, the Archbishop of Canterbury added: "It is the opinion here, that no more than three bishops should be consecrated for the United States of America; who may consecrate others on their return, if more be found necessary." Although the way was now open for the consecration of American candidates, the English bishops had not yet agreed to comply with their request. The archbishop concluded: "But whether we can consecrate any, or not, must depend on the answers we may receive, to what we have written."

The Committee of Correspondence responded promptly to the archbishops' communications. The secretary, the Hon. Francis Hopkinson, wrote them a courteous note of thanks, explaining that no action would be possible on their suggestions until a new session of the adjourned Convention was held. On the same day, July 24, 1786, he sent out notices of the need of reconvening to each of the states that had been represented in Philadelphia. In these, he included copies of the letters from the archbishops with all their enclosures. He suggested that a day during the first two weeks of October would be a convenient time for many for reconvening

the third Day of that Month being the meeting of a Corporation at Philadelphia, at which will be present many Gentlemen from several States, who may, after finishing the business of the Corporation, repair to Wilmington, to which Place the General Convention must be summoned.

During the summer of 1786, White received many letters with advice for the next General Convention. Three came from England. On July 28, 1786, the Rev. Alexander Murray wrote that he had seen the Enabling Act, which pleased him

as it required loyalty only to the "*principles* of the Church of England." He commented:

I need hardly remark the liberal catholic spirit the Act is stamped with. It leaves room for admitting local differences in lesser matters which effects not the vitals of our holy religion and the constitution of our Apostolic Episcopal Church.

Murray urged the Americans not to be hasty in their revision of the Prayer Book, and advised them "to listen humbly to your *yet* Superiors here in the Church on any little things it may be a hardship upon them to dispense with."

The Rev. Jacob Duché wrote, on August 12, 1786, lamenting the extent of the revisions in the Proposed Book. He commended

the Church of Jersey for rejecting as you tell me, all alterations except the Political; and yet you say, that you "expect the Book will remain in its present Form." I think you will change your Opinion on ye Receipt of ye Archbishop's Letter.

Duché had heard that Dr. White, Dr. Smith, and Mr. Provoost were to come to England for consecration. He advised them not to "attempt ye Voyage till you have a full Assurance of Success." As their qualifications were excellent, he hoped "that every Impediment, as to your Ecclesiastical Constitution and Liturgy may be removed."

The third letter from England reached White through Benjamin Franklin. It was a rambling epistle from Granville Sharp, written August 17, 1786, containing one interesting comment:

The late accounts in the public papers, that the Episcopal Churches of Virginia and New-York had *elected* candidates for the Episcopal office *in their respective provinces*, gave me very

particular satisfaction, because I had understood from former accounts, that the *General Convention had nominated the candidates*: which would have been a dangerous precedent of infringement on the ancient rights of the clergy and people in each province respectively, *to elect their own bishops*.

Sharp appreciated the delicate balance, being maintained by the federal group, between the rights of the local churches and the responsibility of the General Convention for the whole Church.

During August, White received three letters from prominent American clergymen, discussing a problem raised by the letter from the English bishops. The difficulty, as stated on August 15, 1786 by Dr. Griffith of Virginia, was

the situation in which we have put ourselves by resolving to do nothing finally until the Orders of our Ministry were completed, while they, on the other hand, seem determined not to comply with our request, until we have determined on such a Liturgy and such Articles as shall be satisfactory to them.

As it was generally accepted by Episcopalians that the liturgy could not be altered without the authority of a bishop, Griffith suggested that the American Church accept the superintendence of the English bishops, as the only solution.

On August 10, 1786, the Rev. William West of Maryland wrote White that it was impossible for the American Church to accept the superintendence of the English bishops. If they

purpose to suspend their endeavours on our Behalf till they can be satisfied it may never hereafter be laid to their Charge, That they have been instrumental in enabling us to form a Schism, by having aided us to organize our Church; I fear their Endeavours must always remain Suspended. For it appears to me that this Difficulty can never be removed by any Declaration or Proceedings on our Part; unless we subordinate our Church to their Authoritative Control; which cannot be done. For the

American Church, when duly organized, will undoubtedly claim full and independent Powers as a Church; and no man can say beforehand what it may think proper to do hereafter.

To Dr. William Smith, the attitude of the English bishops made it foolish to reconvene the General Convention. On August 18, 1786, he wrote White that the alterations, which they requested, could only be adopted

by a Convention having Ecclesiastical and Spiritual Authority to ratify a Book for our Church. And till such *Convention* can be had (which certainly will not be next October) we have already determined not to enter upon the Consideration of any *Amendments or Alterations* whatever. Should we take up those hinted by the Archb'ps, how shall we refuse to go upon those also which have been proposed by different State Conventions? . . . There are also some things proposed or recommended by the Archb'ps which cannot be complied with by some States at all, or at least not without calling their Conventions, and perhaps altering some Part of their ecclesiastical Constitutions, all which would require more time than to October, and probably would be productive of much Confusion.

The problem of liturgical revision was growing increasingly tense.

On August 14, 1785, a meeting of the Philadelphia Committee of Correspondence was held at the home of Mr. Hopkinson, attended by Dr. White, Dr. Smith, Dr. Magaw and, Tench Coxe.<sup>31</sup> Arrangements were made to send a packet of material to the archbishops, and a letter with a copy of the Journal of the June Convention to Seabury and Parker. Another effort was made to get in touch with North Carolina and Georgia—the two states from which no word had been received. The letter to the North Carolina clergy was addressed to the Rev. Leonard Cutting of Maryland, for him

<sup>31</sup> The minutes of this meeting are in the White collection of papers at the New York Historical Society.

to forward. It was left with Dr. White to give the Rev. Mr. Wilson, who had recently been ordained and was returning to Maryland. The letter to the clergy of Georgia was given to Mr. Coxe, to be forwarded by water to Savannah. This rather unimportant meeting shows the determination of the federal group to establish and maintain contact with representatives of their Church in all the states, and in England.

The summer of 1786 was a gloomy one for the supporters of the ecclesiastical plan. The thrice postponed convention at Boston failed again on April 26, 1786, because of "the stormy disagreeable weather, or some other causes."<sup>32</sup> In a letter to Parker, written May 6, 1786, Bass explained that travel was impossible at that time, but he was hopeful that the representatives would convene in July. On July 20, 1786, the day following the Harvard commencement, a meeting was held, but it accomplished little. An Act of Association was proposed, but never took effect.<sup>33</sup> Parker's group seems to have been waiting to see which direction the federal group would take.

In Connecticut, the fear of schism increased. On August 2, 1786, the Rev. John Bowden of Norwalk, wrote to Isaac Wilkins of New York, decrying the political and moral corruption of New York. He continued:

Amidst all these Disorders, nothing affects me as much as the State of the Church. It is much to be feared, that there will be a separation of the Eastern and Western Churches. The former, stedfast in Episcopal Principles, would send no delegates to the grand Convention at Philadelphia, last September, because, the Year preceding, the Convention held at N. York departed wholly from the Principles of the Church, in Regard to Government.

<sup>32</sup> *First Mass. Conventions*, p. 160.

<sup>33</sup> C. Batchelder, *A History of the Eastern Diocese*, II (Claremont, N. H., 1876), 114.



Bowden informed Wilkins that the Philadelphia Convention had applied to the English bishops for consecration. Their answer, he continued, had been "a civil put off. . . . But, I am fully satisfied that the English Bishops, will never give their Sanction to a Plan of Government, which leaves out the Episcopal Character." The mention of "the Episcopal Character" naturally led the Connecticut clergyman to describe his own bishop. He wrote:

Bishop Seabury makes a very respectable Figure at the Head of this Church. His abilities, Firmness, Diligence and circumspect Conduct give Church-Men great Hopes, Dissenters great fears. He consecrated about a Month since, the Church lately built in this town; and confirmed near 400 Persons. Nothing is wanting to make this Episcopate flourish, but a little pecuniary Assistance.

The Church in Connecticut continued to grow, but it was harassed by the lack of funds and the fear of schism.

During September, the adjourned Convention, soon to meet in Wilmington, was the center of attention. Both White and Provoost wrote to Parker to invite the New England clergy to send delegates. In his letter, September 1, White gave a brief resume "of ye Substance of ye Letters of ye A'bps." He summarized their views on the proposed liturgical revisions as follows:

In regard to ye proposed Prayer Book, they solemnly exhort us to restore ye omitted Article of ye Ap' Creed, & they wish that we would retain ye other two Creeds in ye Book, altho' we sh'd not think proper to enjoin the Use of them. It does not appear as if a Conformity to ye above were made a Condition of complying with our request.

In regard to the new ecclesiastical constitution, White reported that the bishops were satisfied, except for the article

they considered derogatory to the episcopal character, adding: "this you know we have altered; whether satisfactorily or not we are yet to learn." The rest of the letter repeated the requirements of the bishops for each candidate for consecration.

On September 15, 1786, Parker wrote to decline the two invitations. To Provoost he sent a short, formal note. To White he wrote with his usual frankness. The issue in Massachusetts, he said, was not primarily the suggested liturgical revisions, but the attitude of the General Convention towards bishops in general, and Bishop Seabury in particular. In fact, the Boston convention of July 20, 1786, had been disposed to adopt the Proposed Book, "but were discouraged from the circumstance of your not being agreed in the use of it in those States which were represented in the Convention by which those Alterations were proposed." Consequently, they had decided to leave the use of the old or the Proposed Book optional, "until we become complete in our officers and one common Liturgy is established by the first Order of the Clergy to whom alone, we are of opinion, this matter appertains."<sup>34</sup> Of the anti-Seabury faction at the Philadelphia Convention Parker said:

I am very sorry to see with what coolness and Indifference some of the Gentlemen in your Convention speak of Bishop Seabury, because I foresee that this Conduct must create a Schism in the Church. However Eligible it may appear to them to obtain the Succession from the English Church, I think there can be no real Objection to Dr. Seabury's Consecration or to the Validity of Orders received from him; and I am firmly of opinion that we should never have obtained the Succession from

<sup>34</sup> Parker, Letter to White, September 15, 1786 (N. Y. Hist. Soc.). For emphasis, he repeated the same thought in the following paragraph: "We cannot expect to be united in one common Liturgy till the several States shall have obtained Bishops and they have agreed upon one that shall be calculated for general use and ratified by their Authority."

England, had he or some other not have obtained it first from Scotland.

Parker also commented on the motion prohibiting anyone ordained by Bishop Seabury from being accepted in any of the states represented in the Convention, pending their application to England. He pointed out that two interpretations were possible. The motion might have been passed

from a principle of not doing any thing that might possibly give Umbrage to the English Bishops . . . but if it was not from this motive, it seems to be a declaring war ag't him at a very early period and forebodes a settled and perpetual Enmity.

One further comment on their attitude towards bishops followed: "Your ecclesiastical Constitution is much mended but I think not yet quite right, especially in the 8th Article. A Bishop amenable to Laymen was not, I believe, the Custom in the primitive Ch'h." The rest of the letter was less critical. Parker declined the invitation for a New England delegate to attend the Wilmington Convention, as being impractical and not urgent. He commented on the letter from the English bishops, agreeing, on the whole, with their point of view. At the close of his letter, Parker asked whether the English canon, requiring three bishops to take part in a consecration, need apply in America. "If a bishop duly consecrated has the whole power in himself, why may he not communicate his power, and if he can, why are three necessary."

Parker's query arose from his fear that bishops consecrated in the English line would inevitably produce schism in the American Church. He felt sure that White would be chosen bishop-elect for Pennsylvania, and wanted him to consider not going to England. Actually, White had been elected bishop at a special convention on September 14, 1786, the day before Parker had written, and the testimonial required of

the state convention by the English bishops had been filled out.<sup>35</sup> On September 20, 1786, the New York convention filled out the testimonial for their bishop-elect, Provoost, and started collecting funds for his trip.<sup>36</sup> The federal group were not to be deterred from seeking consecration in England.

As the date for the meeting of the adjourned Convention at Wilmington drew closer, the tension in Massachusetts increased. On August 19, Bass had written a calm and moderate report on the General Convention of June, 1786. On September 30, 1786, Bass again wrote to Parker, this time in great disgust:

I have perused your enclosed papers, and find that our Southern brethren are like to obtain consecration for their Bishops elect; and also, by a motion respecting Bishop Seabury, that they are nearly ripe for making a schism in the American Church. Wiseacres! What a ridiculous figure must they make in the eyes of every sectary or anti-Episcopalian! In the name of Wonder, what objections can be made against the validity of Dr. S's ordinations, that may not as well be made against those of the English Bishops?

On October 2, 1786, Parker wrote critically to the Rev. Samuel Peters in England. Parker saw no reason for the Enabling Act of Parliament, for he did not believe in civil control of spiritual power. He was afraid that the consecration of the bishops-elect by the English bishops "will be the means of dividing the Church in America. But," he continued, "this I may aver that Seabury & his party will be the orthodox, both in point of Doctrine and Discipline."

One other letter, written September 12, 1786, should be noted. The Rev. Jeremiah Leaming of Connecticut wrote to the Rev. Abraham Beach of New York to make two suggestions for the coming Convention. Leaming wanted the pro-

<sup>35</sup> Wilson, *White*, p. 116.

<sup>36</sup> Provoost, Letter to White, September 22, 1786. [N. Y. Hist. Soc.]

posed service for the Fourth of July dropped, and also the word "Protestant" from the official name of the American Church. Tension was high, for Leaming wrote:

It must forever be kept private, both in the Southern States, and in Connecticut, that you and I have corresponded upon these affairs, if we intend, as I have no doubt we both do, to promote the general good of the whole. Many things may be done where there is no suspicion, that cannot be effected where there is.

Before the adjourned Convention at Wilmington met, the Connecticut clergy, including Leaming, assembled at Derby for a five day convocation. On the first day, September 22, 1786, Bishop Seabury delivered his Second Charge to his clergy, an address revealing his understanding of the problems they were currently facing, and his sense of responsibility for their welfare.<sup>37</sup> After complimenting them on the large number of serious and well-informed people they had presented for confirmation, in response to his First Charge, he plunged into the financial difficulties under which he knew they were working. The withdrawal of the S. P. G. salaries had created a crisis. However, the bishop told them that instead of being critical of the present, they should be grateful for all the help received in the past. Undoubtedly their plight was the chastisement of God. "Our duty requires, that we call ourselves to account, and see wherein we have offended; that we humble ourselves before GOD for our negligences and omissions." He urged them to be patient, humble, and faithful, and to trust in God, but at the same time not to be "negligent in using all honest and decent means for our own support." He could only suggest that they live more frugally, try to get additional provision from their

<sup>37</sup> *Bishop Seabury's Second Charge to the Clergy of his Diocese, delivered at Derby, in the State of Connecticut, on September 22, 1786* (New Haven, 1786), in Beardsley, *op. cit.*, pp. 267-282.

congregations, and, if necessary, move to a more promising cure. Whatever occurred, they were to remember, was the dispensation of God, in whose gracious protection they could trust, if they served Him faithfully.

To do their duty to God, they must "drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, by which the truth of the Gospel may be obscured or corrupted, and the salvation of the people endangered." The clergy must attack Deism, which was spreading rapidly in the United States. They were also to guard their congregations against two early heresies, which were again prevalent: Arianism and Socinianism. The advocates of these sought "to discard the divinity of Christ from the Christian system," even though to do so, it was necessary to twist scriptural interpretation to fit some preconceived philosophical concept. Man only can know of God what He has revealed in the Holy Scriptures. Seabury ridiculed Dr. Joseph Priestly for his Unitarian reading of the Bible, saying that when the doctor could perfectly comprehend the Almighty, he might "then too be qualified to correct errors of expression in divine revelation, and teach the Almighty to express himself better." Seabury believed that God meant what he said in the Holy Scriptures, and urged that the Connecticut clergy "be content to submit our ignorance to his knowledge, and to think of him, and believe in him, as he has represented himself to us."

Seabury then turned to the matter of liturgical revision. His one criticism of the Proposed Book, issued by the Philadelphia Convention, was that the alterations had been made without the authority of a Bishop. He said:

The government of the Church by Bishops, we hold to have been established by the Apostles, acting under the commission of Christ, and the direction of the Holy Ghost. . . . This government they have degraded, by lodging the chief authority in a Convention of clerical and lay Delegates—making their Church Episcopal in its Orders, but Presbyterian in its government.

In primitive practice, the liturgy had been provided by the bishop for his diocese, with the advice of his clergy. The basic principle for all liturgical revision, he emphasized, must be

to go back to early Christianity . . . and see what was then the practice of the Church . . . and to conform our own as nearly to it as the state of the Church will permit; always remembering that the government, and doctrines, and sacraments of the Church are settled by divine authority, and are not subjected to our amendment, or alteration.

The rest of Bishop Seabury's Second Charge was largely given over to his official exposition of the meaning of Holy Communion. Rejecting the current views that Holy Communion was "a mere empty remembrance of Christ's death," or "an arbitrary command, and an instance of God's sovereignty over us—requiring our obedience for wrath's sake," or "simply as the renewal of our Christian Covenant," he referred his clergy back to the sentiments of the primitive Christians. He said:

They called and esteemed it to be the Christian Sacrifice, commemorative of the great sacrifice of atonement which Christ had made for the sins of the whole world; wherein, under the symbols of bread and the cup, the body and blood of Christ which he offered up, and which were broken and shed upon the cross, are figured forth . . . And being sanctified by prayer, thanksgiving, the words of institution, and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, are divided among the Communicants as a Feast upon the Sacrifice. And they did believe, that all who worthily partook of the consecrated Elements, did really and truly, though mystically and spiritually, partake of the Body and Blood of Christ.

This, Bishop Seabury stated, was the accepted view of the Church to which they belonged, summarizing as follows:

We have therefore a right to believe and say, that in the Holy Communion, the faithful receiver does, in a mystical and spiritual manner, eat and drink the Body and Blood of Christ, represented by the consecrated bread and wine; and does thereby partake in the atonement made by the passion and death of Christ, having remission through him, of all past sins, and eternal life assured to him.

In conclusion, the bishop said that because of the low state of religion in America

the strongest obligations lie upon us, to hold fast, and contend earnestly for, the faith as it was once delivered to the Saints—To abide by the government, support the doctrines, retain the principles, explain the true nature and meaning of the sacraments and offices of the Church, and endeavor to restore them to that station and estimation, in which the primitive Christians placed and held them.

In focusing the attention of his clergy on Holy Communion, Bishop Seabury laid the foundation for their understanding of his revised Communion Office, which was distributed at the Derby convocation.<sup>38</sup> He accepted primitive usage as the standard of judgment, as he recommended them to do. The most important change he made from the English liturgy then in use was the addition of a prayer of invocation of the Holy Spirit to the prayer of consecration. In his charge, he not only reminded them that some form of invocation had always been present in the early liturgies, but he also explained the wording he incorporated in his service. The prayer of invocation in his communion office asked that the Holy Spirit would bless and sanctify the bread and wine, "that they may become the body and blood of thy most

<sup>38</sup> Beardsley, *op. cit.*, p. 264. Seabury, *Communion Office*, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 437-447.



dearly beloved Son." The new office was "recommended to the Episcopal Congregations in Connecticut," but its use was not required.

The only liturgical revision officially accepted at Derby was the adoption of two new state prayers: one for the Congress of the United States, and one for the governor and rulers of Connecticut.<sup>39</sup> These prayers were sent to Governor Samuel Huntington of Connecticut, for his approval, by Bishop Seabury soon after his return to New London. In his accompanying letter, September 12, 1786, the bishop spoke of two duties he felt towards the state. The first was "to lay all our transactions in which the State is in any wise concerned, before the Supreme Magistrates." The second was

to pray for, and seek to promote, the peace and happiness of the Country in which we live, and the stability and efficacy of the Civil Government under which God's providence has placed us: And we persuade ourselves, that in the discharge of this duty, we have not derogated from the freedom, sovereignty, or independence of this State.

Seabury asked to be notified of any sentiments of disapproval on the part of the state authorities, "that due regard and attention may be paid to them." Who can say whether Seabury wrote this letter to avoid antagonizing an erstwhile powerful enemy, or to assert the Anglican doctrine of the common community, for which both church and state are responsible?

The adjourned General Convention met at Wilmington, October 10-11, 1786.<sup>40</sup> Six of the seven states attending the Philadelphia session were again represented by twenty-one delegates: ten clergy, and eleven laymen. Virginia was not

<sup>39</sup> The two state prayers are given in full in Beardsley, *op. cit.* p. 265.

<sup>40</sup> Perry, *Journals I*, 47-63. Officially voted an adjourned convention on the first day. (*Ibid.*, p. 51.) This is the source of information on this convention, unless otherwise noted.

represented,<sup>41</sup> and Provoost, as secretary, presided for the absent Griffith. New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and South Carolina sent clerical and lay delegates, but Dr. Smith was the sole representative from Maryland. At the first business session, two motions were passed: one, that no one could be accepted as a member of the Convention who had been appointed, not by a state convention, but by an individual parish or parishes; second, that no state could be represented without both a clerical and lay deputy. Consequently, Dr. Smith was not allowed to vote, but he continued to play an active part, serving on several committees.

The main business of the reconvened Convention was the consideration of the communications from the English bishops. On the first day, their letter and the numerous enclosures were read aloud and discussed. A committee was appointed to make a special study of all the papers, and then to report thereon. This committee consisted of a clerical and lay deputy from each of the five states officially present, plus Dr. Smith. On the second day, having sat up all night, the committee reported in the form of "an Act of this Corporation," which was approved by the Convention as their reply to the English bishops.<sup>42</sup> Three concessions were made to the bishops: the disputed phrase on the descent into hell was returned to the Apostles' Creed; the Nicene Creed was restored for optional use; and the Convention agreed to use only the English Book of Common Prayer with ratified changes in the state prayers, until such time as an American Prayer Book was officially established by a General Convention. The Athanasian Creed was not restored. White recorded that he was not worried by the rejection of the Athanasian Creed,

<sup>41</sup> The chairman of the Virginia Standing Committee refused to call a meeting, and so no delegates were elected. Furthermore, it was impossible for Griffith to get the form required by the English bishops filled out. He sent the original testimonial of his election as bishop for Virginia to Wilmington by mail. (Griffith, Letters to White, September 16 and 26, and October 6, 1786. [N. Y. Hist. Soc.]

<sup>42</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 121, and Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59.

which he did not consider as essential in the minds of the English bishops, but he was concerned about the warm debate on the phrase from the Apostles' Creed. "Had the issue been different," he wrote, "there could have been no proceeding to England for consecration at this time, because they who went had all along made up their minds not to go, until the way should be opened by previous negotiation."<sup>43</sup> In their covering letter to the archbishops, the Convention summarized their actions thus:

We have taken into our most serious and deliberate consideration the several matters so affectionately recommended to us in those communications, and whatever could be done towards a compliance with your fatherly wishes and advice, consistently with our local circumstances, and the peace and unity of our Church, as, we trust, will appear from the enclosed Act of our Convention, which we have the honor to transmit to you, together with the Journal of our proceedings.<sup>44</sup>

One important matter remained: the endorsement of any person elected and recommended as bishop by a state convention. The General Convention supplied the testimonials required by the English bishops for the three candidates chosen during the summer of 1786: the Rev. Samuel Provoost, for New York; the Rev. William White, for Pennsylvania; and the Rev. David Griffith, for Virginia. After electing a Committee of Correspondence with the authority to call another General Convention in Philadelphia when necessary, the Convention was adjourned, *sine die*.

In the record, there is no mention of the refusal of the Wilmington Convention to endorse the Rev. William Smith as bishop-elect of Maryland, though he had been chosen by the state convention of 1783. In a letter from Griffith to White, we learn that Smith presented the testimonial of his

<sup>43</sup> White, *op. cit.*

<sup>44</sup> Perry, *Journals*, I, 61. This letter was composed by a committee of three: Dr. Smith, Dr. White, and Dr. Wharton.

election, and asked for the endorsement of the General Convention; a discussion followed in which Smith was publicly censured. Only two deputies voted in his favor.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, as the Convention ended, he was one of eight elected to the Committee of Correspondence, the official representatives of the federal group between conventions. Forty years later White blamed himself for Smith's failure, saying:

In the beginning of the organization of our Church, I thought it my duty to oppose myself to his being recommended by the General Convention to the episcopacy, to which he had been elected by the convention of Maryland: and to me his failure was principally owing.<sup>46</sup>

Again there was the strange contradiction in the opposition to Smith, for he and White remained on friendly terms throughout the years that followed.

From the correspondence of the time, two different sources of the opposition can be discerned. One group, influenced by two former loyalists, disapproved of his churchmanship. On June 24, 1785, Bishop John Skinner of Scotland wrote to the Rev. Jonathan Boucher about an inquiry from Smith concerning the possibility of his securing consecration from the Scottish bishops, with the comment: "that, as our terms would not please him, so his measures would be equally displeasing to us." Undoubtedly, Skinner had been influenced by a letter, dated August 23, 1785, from Dr. T. B. Chandler, who accused Smith of scheming against Seabury, adding that "his principles, with regard to church and state, if he has any, are most commodiously flexible, yielding not only to every blast, but to the gentlest breeze that whispers!" In writing Skinner of his opposition to Smith, Boucher said that he had "by every means in my power, put those, over whom I

<sup>45</sup> Griffith, Letter to White, October 20, 1786.

<sup>46</sup> White, Letter to Bishop Hobart, 1830, quoted in Wilson, *White*, pp. 19, 20.

have any influence, in my old neighbourhood of Virginia and Maryland, on their guard. . . ." Whether Boucher's opposition influenced his former colleagues we do not know. The charge made at the Convention in Wilmington was that, at some time during the General Convention in New York, Dr. Smith had been intoxicated.<sup>47</sup> Smith denied the charge and asked for an investigation.<sup>48</sup> He refused to let the matter drop. Armed with special testimonials from his own vestry and wardens of Chestertown, he tried for re-indorsement at the state convention at Annapolis, October 24, 1786.<sup>49</sup> As a result, several of the clergy who had signed the original testimonial, asked to have their names withdrawn.<sup>50</sup> An inquiry, ordered by the Maryland convention, was dropped and the charge against Smith neither prosecuted nor cleared.<sup>51</sup> Smith was never consecrated, but he remained one of the influential leaders of the Church.

During the last two months of 1786, interest in the American Church centered on the trip to England of the two candidates for consecration: White of Pennsylvania and Provoost of New York.<sup>52</sup> On the day before his departure from Philadelphia, White preached a Thanksgiving Day sermon, at the end of which he stated his view of the problem faced by the Church, as follows:

The organizing of a church so great in extent, and comprehending people of different prejudices and habits; the establish-

<sup>47</sup> Samuel Johnson, Letter to Dr. Andrews, October 31, 1786.

<sup>48</sup> Thos. Cradock, Letter to Dr. Andrews, October 27, 1786.

<sup>49</sup> Johnson, *op. cit.*

<sup>50</sup> West withdrew his name (West, Letter to Andrews, October 31, 1786), as did Andrews (Andrews, Letter to White, November 24, 1786 [N. Y. Hist. Soc.])

<sup>51</sup> Gegenheimer, *Smith*, p. 198.

<sup>52</sup> Griffith was unable to sail, as the Virginia Standing Committee still refused to meet, to fill out his papers or to raise the necessary funds. (Griffith, Letters to White, October 20 and 26, 1786. [N. Y. Hist. Soc.]) The inaction of the committee is said to have been prompted by the Rev. James Madison, later the first Bishop of Virginia.

ing of principles suited to local circumstances, and yet not a departure from the properties of the venerable stock from which we sprung; the preserving an happy medium, equally remote from being dangerous to civil government and from an unrighteous subservancy to power, and the securing our church in this manner from being shocked by any future changes in political interests and opinions, are important objects, involving the happiness of millions.<sup>53</sup>

On November 2, 1786, the two bishops-elect sailed from New York. Two days later, the Rev. Benjamin Moore wrote to Dr. Parker to inform him of their departure, and of their confidence of success. Of the danger of a divided Church, he wrote:

I have my fears, but am not so very apprehensive as you appear to be, that a schism must take place in our Church. A few people in this State, from old grudges on the score of politics, have determined to circumscribe, as far as they possibly can, the authority of Bishop Seabury. But they will not be able to effect their purpose to any great degree. His Episcopal powers have already been acknowledged by most of the Southern States, and Truth and Justice will in due time, get the better of Prejudice and Partiality.

On November 20, 1786, the two bishops-elect reached England, and on December 6, 1786, Dr. White sent his first report to the Committee of the Church in Pennsylvania.<sup>54</sup> He and Dr. Provoost had called on John Adams, who arranged to introduce them to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

<sup>53</sup> White, *A Sermon preached in Christ Church and St. Peter's, October 29, 1786, the day preceding his departure for England to obtain Episcopal Consecration* (Philadelphia, 1786), pp. 15-16.

<sup>54</sup> White, Letter to the Committee of the Church of Pennsylvania, December 6, 1786, in White, *Memoirs*, pp. 125-127. One of the three clergymen on the committee was the Rev. Joseph Pilmore, who had been denied the right to preach in White's churches the first of the year, because he had been ordained by Bishop Seabury. The letter cited is the source of the information that follows unless otherwise noted.

Their first interview with the archbishop was uneventful. He emphasized the fact that only three bishops would be consecrated for America. Provoost brought up the fact that he could not remain long in England, because "there was a peculiarity in the charter of his church, requiring his presence at the annual election at Easter." The archbishop replied that "he had no inclination to detain us so long." He said that there would be a short delay as he was engaged in some ecclesiastical business. Thus, White pointed out, he gained the time to consult with other bishops, who were expected in London the middle of January for the opening of Parliament.<sup>55</sup> The best news was the reassurance, given by many who had talked to the archbishop earlier, "of there not being the least doubt of our Church's having retained the essential doctrines of the Gospel, as held by the Church of England."

By the end of 1786, it was clear that the federal group would soon have two bishops, consecrated in the English succession, resident in America. Whether or not schism would result, was still uncertain.

<sup>55</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 27.

## CHAPTER VI

### *Apparent Stalemate (1787-88)*

THE years 1787 and 1788 were marked by conflicting currents of action. Efforts were made to complete the English and the Scottish Episcopates in America separately. At the same time, efforts were made from both sides to unite the two lines. Both groups wanted to be sure of three bishops who would act together, as required by canon law, and both dreaded schism. Consequently, these two years were filled with tentative moves, which seem in retrospect to have served as a much needed delaying action—a cooling off period. It will not be necessary to survey these years as closely as those that have preceded, but only to point out the main developments.

February, 1787, was an important month for both groups. On February 4, 1787, Dr. White and Dr. Provoost were consecrated.<sup>1</sup> Dr. White had kept the Pennsylvania committee informed of the pleasant intercourse which he and Dr. Provoost had had with the Archbishop of Canterbury and several of the other bishops.<sup>2</sup> Though he had no time to send a letter to Philadelphia after the consecration, he kept full notes about that important occasion. The consecration was performed in the chapel at Lambeth Palace, in the presence of only a few people, one of whom was his old friend and teacher, the Rev. Jacob Duché. The two archbishops and

<sup>1</sup> The warrant permitting the consecration of White and Provoost, dated January 25, 1787, is reprinted in R. G. Salomon, "British Legislation and American Episcopacy," *Hist. Mag.*, XX (September, 1951), 290-291.

<sup>2</sup> White, *Memoirs*, pp. 124-134, and pp. 136-140.



the bishops of Bath, Wells, and Peterborough joined in the imposition of hands. One of the archbishop's chaplains read the prayers, and another preached. At the conclusion of the service, the new American bishops were invited to dine with the English prelates. The papers of consecration were duly registered the same day.<sup>3</sup> The next day, after having arranged to defray any expenses that had been incurred on their behalf, the new bishops left London to begin their trip home. On February 17, 1787, they sailed from Falmouth for New York.

In the same month an important move was made by the Connecticut clergy. On February 27, 1787, a convocation met at Wallingford to elect a candidate to go to Scotland for consecration.<sup>4</sup> The Rev. Abraham Jarvis was chosen. According to his son

it was intended to obtain the canonical number of bishops in New England of the Scottish line, and thus preserve a purely primitive and Apostolic Church, holding fast the form of sound words, and the faith once delivered to the saints.<sup>5</sup>

The new bishop was also needed as coadjutor for the overworked Bishop Seabury; to assist him and in the event of his decease, to carry on the Connecticut church. When Bishop Seabury wrote to ask Bishop Skinner (March 2, 1787) whether the Scottish bishops would consecrate a coadjutor for Connecticut, he explained the point of view of his clergy as follows:

They are much alarmed at the steps taken by the Clergy and Laity to the south of us, and are very apprehensive that, should it please God to take me out of the world, the same spirit of innovation in the government and Liturgy of the Church would

<sup>3</sup> The official papers for White are given in full, *ibid.*, pp. 321-324.

<sup>4</sup> Roger Viets, Letter to Parker, March 19, 1787.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted without bibliographical data, Beardsley, *Seabury*, p. 294.

be apt to rise in this State, which has done so much mischief in our neighborhood. The people, you know, especially in this country, are fond of exercising power when they have an opportunity; and should this See become vacant, the Clergy may find themselves under the fatal necessity of falling under the Southern establishment, which they consider as a departure from Apostolical institution.

It had been decided that no one would be sent to Scotland until word was received that the Scottish bishops approved. A waiting period of four months resulted before any answer came.

On April 17, 1787, Bishop White and Bishop Provoost arrived in New York. From Bishop White's papers, we know that he was warmly welcomed.<sup>6</sup> On April 24, Dr. Thomas Claggett wrote to congratulate him, and to invite him to attend the next Maryland convention, to be held in May. Dr. Griffith also wrote, on April 24, to congratulate him, and to lament the critical condition of the Church in Virginia. On May 1, 1787, Bishop Seabury sent similar letters of congratulation to both bishops. To both he wrote of "the present unsettled state of the Church of England in this country, and of the necessity of union and concord, among all its members in the United States of America." As the most promising approach to union, he proposed that they [the three bishops] meet to determine on a uniform worship and discipline. He invited both men to attend the next Connecticut convocation, which was to be held in Stamford, not far from New York, in June. Writing to William Stevens of England, on May 9, 1787, Bishop Seabury described his purpose in addressing the new bishops as follows:

I have written to them both, proposing an interview with them, and an union of the Church of England through all the States, on the ground of the present Prayer Book, only accomo-

<sup>6</sup> White, Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, April 28, 1787.

dating it to the civil Constitution of this country; and the government of the Church to continue unaltered as it now is, with a body of Canons to give energy to it, and direct its operation. I know not what effect this overture may have. But my fears are greater than my hopes. Everything I can fairly do to procure union and uniformity shall certainly be done.

As far as is known, Bishop Provoost never replied to Bishop Seabury's invitation. Bishop White's reply, written on May 21, 1787, was not encouraging. Although he began by stating that he heartily desired the union of all the churches, the rest of his letter was given to the enumeration of the points on which he disagreed with the Connecticut churchmen. First, the churches which he represented would be unwilling to unite on any basis other than their proposed ecclesiastical constitution, to which the Connecticut Church was opposed. Furthermore, they insisted on the right of the laity to share in the legislative power of the Church. If the general body of the Church decided to retain the English Prayer Book he would agree, but he felt that a revision was wanted, not only by the churches he represented, but also by the Massachusetts group. Seabury's proposal, that the worship and discipline of the Church be determined by the bishops and made binding by their authority, was certain to be rejected by White, to whom an acceptable union could only be achieved by the authority of a General Convention.

Bishop Seabury sent a copy of Bishop White's letter to Parker, asking for his opinion of it. In commenting on it to the Rev. Bela Hubbard,<sup>7</sup> Parker said that in his opinion Bishop White would have liked to accept Bishop Seabury's suggestion, as he had frequently expressed a desire "to coalesce with his Northern Brethren and to form *one* Church in all the essentials of doctrine, discipline and worship." One difficulty, Parker believed, lay with Bishop Provoost,

<sup>7</sup> Parker, Letter to the Rev. Bela Hubbard, June 1, 1787.

as "some strong prejudices, upon the old score of politics, still remain in the minds of the New York gentlemen against Bishop Seabury, and therefore of their Bishop your deponent saith not." However, the issue of lay representation seemed to Parker to present the most serious difficulty.<sup>8</sup> He explained to his friend from Connecticut:

The grand obstacle to a union, I foresee, will be in matters of government. The Southern States have admitted Laymen to take part with them; Connecticut has not. They cannot rid themselves of the Lay brethern, and you will not admit Laymen. This will keep you apart. I impatiently wait to hear the result of your meeting.

The meeting to which Dr. Parker referred was the clergy convocation at Stamford, in June, 1787. His hope, that some action would be taken towards removing the causes of disunion, was doomed to disappointment. The Connecticut clergy were still awaiting an answer from Scotland, and, consequently, the convocation was an unimportant one.<sup>9</sup>

When Bishop Skinner's letter finally arrived, it resulted in further delay.<sup>10</sup> It was friendly and sympathetic, yet it revealed a manifest reluctance on the part of the Scottish bishops to consecrate another bishop for America. Bishop Skinner wrote frankly of the dissatisfaction felt in Scotland about the conduct of the federal group in America, saying:

It has given us great concern to hear of the ecclesiastical proceedings in some of your Southern States. We fondly hoped that Episcopal Clergymen would have gladly embraced the opportunity of settling their Church on a pure and primitive footing,

<sup>8</sup> Hubbard himself had stated that the innovation of lay delegates would prevent the orthodox Connecticut Church from uniting with the "Southern" group. (Hubbard, Letter to Samuel Peters, December 2, 1786. [N. Y. Hist. Soc.])

<sup>9</sup> Beardsley, *op. cit.* p. 305.

<sup>10</sup> Skinner, Letter to Bishop Seabury, June 20, 1787.

and of regulating their whole ecclesiastical polity, as well as their doctrine and worship, according to Apostolical institution. In this hope, however, we have been sadly disappointed.

However, since White and Provoost had been consecrated by the English bishops, the Scottish bishops felt more hopeful for the American Church. Promises to maintain orthodoxy of belief had been made by both of the new bishops, and

we are even made to understand that it was recommended to the two Prelates to hold communion with the Bishop of Connecticut, to which recommendation a considerable degree of credit seems to attach, from the circumstance of no more than two being invested with the Episcopal office.

Furthermore, the English bishops had been satisfied with the second edition of the proposed revisions, and so

provided the analogy of faith and the purity of worship be preserved, it were a pity, we should think, to interrupt Episcopal union and communion in any part of the Catholic Church. . . . Wherefore, all these things duly considered, we are humbly of the opinion that the objects which our good brother of Connecticut and his Clergy have in view may now be obtained, without putting any of them to the trouble and expense of coming to Scotland.

The Scottish bishops believed that the two new bishops would cooperate with Bishop Seabury. If not, the Scottish Church would consecrate a coadjutor for Connecticut. But, Skinner added, "fain would we hope better things of these your American brethren, and that there will be no occasion for two separate communions among the Episcopalians of the United States." The hesitation on the part of the Scottish bishops was the result of their relation to the English Church. Skinner wrote:

prudence, you must be aware, bids us turn our eyes to our own situation, which, though it affords no excuse for shrinking from duty, will, at the same time, justify our not stepping beyond our line any farther than duty requires. . . . We shall expect to hear from you at full length on this interesting subject, and doubt not but you will believe us ever ready to contribute, as far as is necessary and incumbent on us, to the support of primitive truth and order in the Church of Christ.

Bishop Skinner's confidence that the three bishops resident in the United States would act together was not widely shared. On May 19, 1787, the Virginia convention decided to ask that Bishop White and Bishop Provoost, or either one alone, consecrate Dr. Griffith, as they had no money to send him to England.<sup>11</sup> In a letter to Bishop White, written May 28, 1787, Griffith commented bitterly:

They are in hopes you may be prevailed on to act contrary to your Sentim'nts, the Opinion of the Bishops of England, and the general practice of the Christian Church. Their *first* proposition was that you and your Brother of N. York should request Bp. Seabury to unite with you in the intended Consecration; but this project was rejected as impracticable, and the more absurd one adopted.

The request for an uncanonical consecration was refused by both bishops. Bishop Provoost, in declining, urged the Virginians "to use every exertion to enable Dr. Griffith to embark immediately for England."<sup>12</sup> Bishop White, having declined, began to look elsewhere for a candidate to send to England. On July 5, 1787, he wrote to Parker:

<sup>11</sup> The Standing Committee of Virginia, Request to Bishops White and Provoost for the consecration of Griffith, May 19, 1787. [N. Y. Hist. Soc.] A note on the side in White's handwriting states that this request is proof that Griffith had been elected bishop.

<sup>12</sup> Provoost, Letter to White, June 29, 1787. By September 10, 1787, only £ 20 had been raised towards Griffith's trip to England, according to the treasurer of the Virginia Church. (Buchanan, Letter to White, September 10, 1787.)

I wish sincerely that Massachusetts would unite with us, and choose a person for consecration; not merely as it would tend to cement the Church throughout the whole continent, but because I think it would add to the wisdom of our determinations whenever a General Convention shall be held for the final settlement of our ecclesiastical system.

In the interest of a united Church, Bishop White entered into correspondence with the Rev. Jeremiah Leaming, asking the prominent Connecticut clergyman for suggestions as to the best way to achieve union. Leaming replied with the same method already proposed by his bishop. In a letter dated July 9, 1787, he wrote:

It appears to me, that if you, Bishop Provoost and Bishop Seabury could have a private meeting, all matters might be adjusted in such a manner, that a union might easily be effected. . . . And provided the parties were brought together, and would explain themselves to each other, in meekness and *love*, all disagreeable passions would subside and be extinguished forever.

According to Leaming, the only objection that had been raised against Seabury was that he was a non-juror, an objection that was supported by those who had always been opposed to episcopal government. He concluded:

The Church in this State would be pleased to have the old forms altered as little as may be; but for the sake of union they will comply as far as they possibly can. And I do not see how a union can be more advantageous to us than it will be to you. If it is reciprocal, both ought to give way, and not to be too rigid. And I trust this will be the result, when matters are maturely considered.

Uncertainty as to the best way to promote church unity marked Parker's letter to White, written July 19, 1787.

Liturgical revision, he believed, should be the result of union, and not its basis. He wrote:

I cannot myself consent to any further alterations, till a uniform Liturgy is agreed upon by the whole Church in these States, and to effect this I shall be willing to give up anything but the essential doctrines of our Church, and to adopt anything not repugnant thereto.

Massachusetts was unwilling to take any action until it was clear how matters were to be settled between White and Seabury. Of the six clergymen in the state, "two seem to adhere to Connecticut, two to your states, and the other two will join either party that will bid fairest to cement the whole." If they elected a candidate for consecration, Parker asked:

will it be necessary for him to go to England to obtain it, or can two Bishops confer it authentically; or is Dr. Griffith on his way to England, or will the Southern Bishops unite with Bishop Seabury in this act? . . . The reason for my proposing these questions is, that the answers may operate very considerably in the determinations of the Clergy here.

No uncertainty as to the best procedure existed in the minds of the Connecticut men. On July 30, 1787, Leaming again wrote to Bishop White, acknowledging another letter from him. Leaming stressed the importance of a meeting of the three bishops, as "whatever may be agreed upon by you three, each Bishop may bring his own Clergy to acquiesce in it; and by that means matters would be fixed upon a permanent basis." He put the responsibility for such a meeting on Bishop White. Bishop Seabury, having once made the proposal, should now be approached by the others. The problem was to get Bishop Provoost to agree. However, Leaming continued:



I cannot think he would hesitate a moment, if he knew the sentiments of his own Clergy in that respect as fully as I do. They all to a man, would be overjoyed to find such a plan taking place. There is no one thing he can possibly do, that would raise his character so high among his Clergy, as this will.

On August 6, 1787, Bishop White answered Parker's question as to the possibility of Bishop Seabury's being included as a consecrator. He explained that, as the English bishops were unable to recognize Bishop Seabury's consecration, and as three bishops were canonically required

I am apprehensive it may seem a breach of faith towards them, if not intended deception in us, were we to consecrate without the usual number of three, all under ye English Succession: although it would not be inconsistent with this idea, that another gentleman under a different succession, should be joined with us.<sup>13</sup>

In the same conciliatory spirit, Bishop White continued:

I am sincerely desirous of seeing our Church throughout those States united in *one* Ecclesiastical Legislature, and I think that any difficulties which have hitherto seemed in ye way might be removed by mutual forbearance. If there are any further difficulties than those I allude to, of difference of opinion, they do not exist with me: and I shall always be ready to do what lies in my power, to bring all to an agreement.

During the last months of 1787, Bishop Seabury devoted his full attention to building up the Church in Connecticut. On September 20, 1787, a new church was consecrated in New London, and Bishop Seabury convoked his clergy for the occasion. According to two letters from the Rev. Ashbel Baldwin to his friend, the Rev. Tillotson Bronson,<sup>14</sup> in Ver-

<sup>13</sup> White, Letter to Parker, August 6, 1787. This was the method used in the first American consecration in 1789.

<sup>14</sup> Dated November, 1787.

mont, although not many of the clergy were able to attend, it was an impressive ceremony. The bishop wore a mitre for the first time, and he preached an excellent sermon. Both letters were enthusiastic in their support of Seabury. Mention was made of the many tours made by the bishop, for confirming and ordaining, and of the warm receptions he received. Baldwin wrote:

Depend not on rumors; the Clergy in Connecticut are well pleased with their Bishop, and will run the risk of a disunion with the Southern gentry, rather than forsake him, if he will stay with us. We hope, however, better things than that. A correspondence is now open on the subject, between Seabury, Provoost, and White, and we expect the issue will be a friendly coalition in Episcopal consecration, if not in Church government.

By the end of 1787, the two groups in the Church were entirely separated from one another, and yet the will to unite was so pronounced that a feeling of hopefulness was generated. The invisible bond that kept them from making a decisive break becomes more apparent in contrast to the one break that occurred: in November, 1787, King's Chapel became a Unitarian Church. On November 16, 1787, a formal protest, with signatures of the proprietors, was presented against James Freeman's taking over the church.<sup>15</sup> The wardens replied that only seventeen proprietors had protested, five of those illegally by proxies. Three more had changed their membership to Trinity Church, and three others had continued at King's Chapel since the Prayer Book revision. They claimed that twenty-four of the old proprietors, and twenty, who had recently purchased pews, were loyal to

<sup>15</sup> A handwritten copy of the protest, without date or signatures, is in the Massachusetts Diocesan Library. It is printed with the date and signatures as an appendix in F. W. P. Greenwood, *History of King's Chapel* (Boston, 1833), pp. 183-185.

Freeman. As anyone could join, no one had been deprived of property. No new doctrines had been added, though parts of the creed had been omitted.<sup>16</sup> On November 18, 1787, the break became final, when James Freeman was ordained by his senior warden.<sup>17</sup> King's Chapel was no longer an Episcopal Church.<sup>18</sup> Freeman had broken with the Church of England in four ways: (1) in his rejection of the doctrine of the Trinity; (2) in his independent revision of the Prayer Book; (3) in his non-Episcopal ordination; and (4) in having created schism. To avoid these same pitfalls, both the federal and ecclesiastical groups delayed completing their reorganization in 1787.

There is little of importance to report in 1788. Bishop White began the year by seeking advice on his duties as bishop, especially in regard to ordination. On January 12, 1788, Dr. Griffith confirmed the fact that there was a canon in Virginia that a candidate must remain a deacon for six months before being raised to the priesthood.<sup>19</sup> He added: "This can affect a Bishop of Virginia only; It would subject to very unreasonable hardships, Gentlemen who travel a great distance for Ordination." On the subject of calling a General Convention, Griffith replied in the negative, as he feared that if they were held too frequently, they would be neglected. On January 15, 1788, Bishop Provoost replied to a letter from Bishop White, advising him not to ordain some candidates from New Jersey, until they had been recommended by their state convention. On the advisability of waiving some aspect of the literary requirements of candidates, Provoost wrote:

<sup>16</sup> The answer of the wardens is given in Greenwood, *op. cit.*, pp. 185-192.

<sup>17</sup> Freeman was refused ordination by Seabury, in June, 1786, but was assured of ordination by Provoost, in September, 1786. (Parker, Letter to White, September 15, 1786. [N. Y. Hist. Soc.]) Provoost later refused.

<sup>18</sup> The claim of the Unitarian Society to possession of the church property was upheld by the courts. (Tiffany, *History*, p. 369.)

<sup>19</sup> Griffith, Letter to White, January 12, 1788.

As the rubric you allude to is the only restriction left upon the American Bishops by the General Convention as to the Literary Qualifications they are to require in the persons who offer themselves for holy orders, it is the general Sentiment here that it ought not to be dispensed with.

On January 21, 1788, Dr. West answered Bishop White that it was up to each bishop to determine the fitness of a candidate for ordination. Testimonials as to moral character would, of course, be obtained from those to whom the candidate was well known, but literary qualifications should be decided by the bishop. Though he hoped for a learned ministry, he realized that there might be exceptions. As secretary for Maryland, he asked to be told "the *least* Degree of literary Attainment *absolutely* necessary for the *due* Qualifications of a Candidate." Bishop White was learning the full extent of his new responsibilities.

About the same time, a breach in the friendly relations between Bishop Seabury and Dr. Parker was threatened. Early in 1788, Bishop Seabury was invited to preach the annual sermon for the Episcopal Charitable Society at Trinity Church at Easter. On hearing that a portion of the Proposed Book was used regularly at Dr. Parker's church, Bishop Seabury declined the invitation, as he was unwilling to approve the unauthorized revisions. On January 28, 1788, Parker replied to the bishop with a full and formal account of the procedures in Massachusetts in respect to the liturgy. Parker stated that very few alterations had been adopted in his church. He reminded the bishop that the alterations accepted by the New England group in their convention of September, 1785, had been based on the recommendations made by the bishop and his committee following the Connecticut convocation of August, 1785. Copies of the revisions made at Boston had then been sent to Connecticut and to

the General Convention at Philadelphia, in an effort to secure a uniform liturgy in all the states.

Parker asked: "In our peculiar situation, without a Bishop, and most of our Churches without a Clergyman, what other mode could we devise?" The only change other than "those alterations suggested by yourself, and adopted by this Convention" had been "to take the Psalms as selected by the Convention at Philadelphia," for the sake of shortening the morning service and of omitting the cursing psalms. Parker was willing to change the revisions, if it seemed advisable, though he was reluctant to restore the Athanasian Creed and the frequent repetition of the Lord's Prayer. It would be impossible to change just for one occasion, but he was sure Massachusetts would accept an official uniform liturgy when one had been agreed to by the several American bishops. The invitation to the bishop to preach at Trinity Church, Boston, was reiterated. After receiving Parker's explanation, Bishop Seabury accepted the invitation, but he did not retract his original criticism. On February 13, 1788, he wrote to Parker regretting the resentment he had noted in the unusually formal letter he had received. He explained but repeated his rebuke:

I cannot help thinking you have been too hasty in adopting the alterations as you have done—that it has rendered a union among the Churches the more difficult, and clouded the small prospect of uniformity, which gave any encouragement to aim at it. . . . I did and I do wish to have as great a uniformity as possible among our Churches; and I was grieved at a measure which I thought impeded so good a work.

On March 25, 1788, Bishop Seabury preached in Dr. Parker's church, and the breach was avoided.

During the rest of 1788, both groups became increasingly discouraged. Both were blocked in the development of their

own plans, and the hope of union seemed to grow dimmer. On June 16, 1788, the Rev. Jeremiah Leaming wrote to Bishop White:

As to the affair upon which our correspondence commenced, it appears to me, that the union of the Churches is, at present, a matter that cannot be affected. I was in hopes to see it accomplished soon after your return from England. But you inform me some object, and will have nothing to do with the Scotch Succession.

Leaming was convinced that the doubt as to the validity of Bishop Seabury's orders had been deliberately sown by the Unitarians, in an effort to destroy the Episcopal Church. He was disturbed by the lack of understanding on the part of ordinary churchmen, as to the nature of the Church, and had written a small treatise on various subjects to assist them. He sent a copy to Bishop White, with the hope that it might be of help to the Pennsylvania churchmen too, saying: "If we desire to preserve the Church, we must acquaint the people for what end the Church was appointed, and what the doctrines of a Christian Church are, in order that they may understand them." Leaming's offer, to help educate the Philadelphia group in the true nature of the Church, was especially interesting in view of the doubt felt in Connecticut as to their orthodoxy. Probably he believed that no union would be possible, until the two groups agreed on their doctrine of the nature of the Church.

During the summer of 1788, Bishop White was made acutely aware of the difficulty of completing the episcopate in the federal group. He received letters from three southern clergymen, each lamenting the hopeless condition of the Church in his state. The Rev. Henry Purcell of South Carolina, while condemning the entire Convention at Wilmington as illegal and unconstitutional, was especially dis-

gusted with his own state.<sup>20</sup> He said that his church had not been properly represented as the Rev. Robert Smith had taken as lay delegates a minor and an unbaptized person. Dr. Griffith, writing on July 9, 1788, told Bishop White that he had given up hopes for Virginia; he had decided to resign as bishop-elect, and he urged that some other state make application to England as promptly as possible. Dr. West was equally discouraged, saying that "the present state of our Ch'h. in Maryland will, perhaps, place her among the last of those who shall be completely organized." The trouble was that they were blocked by the fact that Dr. Smith had been elected bishop, but was no longer supported by the clergy. No application to England could be expected from Maryland. He concluded:

I have troubled you with these Matters, in Order to apologize for the seeming Backwardness of our Chh. in perpetuating a Succession of its Ministry. But I trust other Chhs. are more happily circumstanced than this, and that, being so, they will recommend and send forward a Gentleman to complete the Canonical Number necessary for the desirable Purpose.

No help in completing the episcopate was to be expected from the South.

The Church in Connecticut was also blocked. A clergy convocation was held in North Haven in October, 1788, but though it was well attended, no advance was made towards completing their episcopate.<sup>21</sup> The letter to Bishop Seabury from Bishop Skinner had delayed the sending of a candidate to Scotland for consecration. Nor was there anything to do towards a union with the federal group. Bishop Seabury had expressed his desire to meet with the other two bishops, but had been refused. As long as the validity of his orders

<sup>20</sup> Purcell, Letter to White, quoted without a date, in Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 371.

<sup>21</sup> Beardsley, *op. cit.*, p. 332.

was questioned, no possibility of union existed. The convocation, therefore, was concerned only with local, routine business.

In order to overcome the apparently insuperable obstacle of doubt as to the validity of his orders, Bishop Seabury decided to obtain a list of the Scottish succession back to the time of the restoration of Charles II. He already had a list from 1688 on. For this purpose he wrote to Bishop Abernethy Drummond of Edinburgh, on November 7, 1788, explaining his need for the new list as follows:

Our state in this country is still unsettled, and like I fear to continue so. Bishop White, of Philadelphia, seems disposed to an Ecclesiastical Union, but will take no leading or active part to bring it about. He will risk nothing; and Bishop Provoost seems so elated with the honor of an English Consecration that he affects to doubt the validity of mine.

Seabury added: "Another objection Bishop P——t makes against me is that I was an enemy to my country, i.e., I did not disregard my oaths and run headlong into the late Rebellion, now glorious Revolution." One other insight into the cautious way in which the Connecticut Church was proceeding was given in Seabury's inquiry as to the cost of having a Prayer Book printed in Edinburgh. He explained that "we have some talk here of getting an edition of the Prayer Book printed, with the Canons and the Rubrics accommodated to our state." As bishop, Seabury had authority to issue a new book, and yet two years after his return to Connecticut, he was still delaying. We know from his letter to Parker of February, 1788, that he believed the adoption of separate liturgies would make a union of the churches even more unlikely. Bishop Seabury had not yet abandoned all hope of a united Church, but he was preparing to function independently, if necessary.

The federal group were still trying to find a third bishop



from the English succession. In the late fall of 1788, Bishop White received two suggestions. On November 27, 1788, Dr. Griffith wrote proposing that financial aid be sought from England, either from the S.P.G. or from a subscription to be raised by the English bishops. He could "devise no other way for the introduction of an Episcopate in Virg'a." A more startling proposal was made by the Rev. Alexander Murray of London, who suggested that he be elected bishop of New Jersey, Delaware, or Maryland, to serve until a fourth bishop was consecrated, at which time he would resign. There would be no question about his credentials, as he was well known to the archbishops. In case some people might feel that he had forfeited his American citizenship by returning to England during the Revolution, he suggested that Bishop White grant him an honorary citizenship as a member of the Philadelphia Episcopal Academy. As Bishop Seabury had been well received in Connecticut, Murray felt that he had nothing to fear. This remarkable suggestion was also sent to Bishop Provoost in New York, February 16, 1789, who presented it to the New Jersey clergy, but without success. Neither idea bore fruit.<sup>22</sup>

Bishop White naturally turned his hopes to Massachusetts. In the fall of 1788, he wrote to Dr. Parker to urge that a delegation from Massachusetts attend the next General Convention, to be held in July, 1789, saying that "if there should continue a backwardness even to confer with us: it is evident we shall never build up one respectable Church, pervading ye United States."<sup>23</sup> He also told Parker of the difficulty of securing a bishop from the southern states, and expressed the hope that one might be obtained for Massachusetts. He added: "I have formerly expressed to you another reason for my wishing you with us: and ye reason

<sup>22</sup> Provoost, Letter to White, February 16, 1789. Also Griffith, Letter to White, February 10, 1789.

<sup>23</sup> White, Letter to Parker, undated but marked by Parker as received in December, 1788.

still exists: ye effecting a junction with our brethern of Connecticut." In conclusion, he repeated the importance of completing the episcopate from the English line in the United States, and doubted its being done in his group, because of Virginia's having "shown that there is no dependence from them," and because of "ye smallness of our communion in some states, and very particular circumstances in others."

Bishop White might have been discouraged had he known of the wholehearted support Parker was giving to Bishop Seabury at this time. In a letter to the Rev. Tillotson Bronson, dated November 14, 1788, concerning the Church's claim to lands in Vermont, Parker wrote:

I have no doubts in my mind respecting the validity of Bishop Seabury's Ordinations, altho the Bishops in England & those here who derive the Succession from them do not chuse to acknowledge it. But I have no Idea that any temporal power can deprive any persons of spiritual Authority, & consequently the laying the non-juring Bishops under a *praemunire*, tho' it might deprive them of their temporalities, could not affect their Office as Bishops, & that the Succession from them is equally as good as from the English Bishops. However since the death of the late Pretender they are no more Nonjurors, but acknowledge & pray for the present reigning family.

One more note remains to be reported, written on December 16, 1788, by Bishop Seabury to Dr. Parker. It was brief, but forceful, stating:

I intended to have written you more particularly concerning a union with the Southern Churches; but I am obliged to go out of town for two or three days, and shall not be back in time for the post. I can now only observe, that as it appears to me, all the difficulty lies with those Churches, and not with us in Connecticut. I have several times proposed and urged a union. It has been received and treated I think, coldly. And

yet I have received several letters urging such a union on me, as though I were the only person who opposed it. This is not fair. I am ready to treat of and settle the terms of union on any proper notice. But Bishops W. and P. must bear their part in it, actively, as well as myself; and we must come into the union on even terms, and not as underlings.

This was not a conciliatory note, but it was an honest statement of the only possible approach to union. Before the end of the next year these conditions had been realized, and union had been achieved.

## *Union Achieved (1789)*

THE center of interest for the Episcopal churches in America in 1789 was the General Convention, held in two sessions, in July and in September. During the first six months of 1789, preliminary discussions of the basic issues to be dealt with by the Convention were carried on by correspondence. According to Bishop White:

Previously to the meeting of the convention, it was foreseen that the unfinished business of the Episcopacy, and the relative situation of the Church in Connecticut, would be the principal objects of attention, and must be thought important, not only in themselves, but because of the influence which each had on the other.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of June, 1789, Bishop White had received expressions of opinion on these issues from leaders of four states: Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, and Virginia.

On January 20, 1789, Dr. Parker answered Bishop White's letter, urging the churchmen of Massachusetts to elect a candidate to send to England for consecration. Parker explained that the churches in his state were too disorganized to take such a step, having "at present more of the resemblance of Independent congregations than of Episcopal Churches, having one common centre of union and communion." Of the six clergymen in the state, one had been ordained by Bishop Seabury, and one by Bishop White; "two of the

<sup>1</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 140.

other four are so lax in their principles of Episcopal government, that I rather think them adverse to uniting under any common head." Furthermore, there was no money available for a trip to England. For the sake of a united Church, Parker urged that a reconciliation be effected between the federal and ecclesiastical groups. If necessary, allowance could be made for variations, from state to state, in government and in liturgy. He wrote:

An absolute uniformity of government and worship, perhaps, will never take place under a Republican form of civil government, and where there is such a variety of sentiments in religious matters. Still I conceive we may become so far united as to be one Church, agreeing in the general principles of discipline and worship.

For example, he suggested that the question of lay representation in church government—the main issue between them<sup>2</sup>—might be decided by each state separately. He himself considered lay representation a necessity, because of the Church's financial dependence on the laity, but he understood both points of view. He continued:

It is vain to dispute which form comes nearest to the primitive practice. The question is, which is most expedient under our present circumstances? They are doubtless too rigid in their sentiments, at least for the latitude of America, and must finally be obliged to relax a little. They think, on the other hand, that your Constitution is too democratical for Episcopal government, and especially in permitting the Laity to sit as judges at the trial of a Bishop, and to have a voice in deposing him.

<sup>2</sup> Parker said that Bishop Seabury's orders could no longer be made an issue, because of the improved relation between the Scottish and English Churches. Moreover the last of the Stuart line had died on January 31, 1788, and on April 24, 1788, the Scottish Church had announced its allegiance to George III. The act of Parliament, needed to remove the penal laws against the Scottish Church, was expected to be enacted at any moment, at the time of Parker's letter. Largely through indifference it was not passed until June 15, 1792. (Beardsley, *Seabury*, pp. 339-343.)

In proof of Bishop Seabury's disposition to unity, Parker continued by quoting from his letter of December 16, 1788. Rumors that the New York convocation also wanted reconciliation had reached Parker, who, in turn, agreed to attend the coming Convention, if his presence would help forward union. He concluded:

In the meantime, I could wish to know if any general principles are agreed upon which it is supposed the opposite parties will accede to, and which would be the basis of union. If some preliminaries of this kind were previously settled, it would facilitate the business, and afford a more pleasing prospect of success.

On February 24, 1789, Bishop Provoost wrote to Bishop White. On the matter of completing the episcopate, Provoost agreed that there was no chance of Dr. Murray's being accepted as a bishop in America, and that Dr. Griffith must wait for the next Virginia convention, in order to proceed according to the instructions of the English bishops. His dislike of Bishop Seabury, far from abating, had developed into an unwillingness to have anything to do with the Church in Connecticut. He wrote:

An Invitation to the Church in that State to meet us in General Convention I conceive to be neither necessary or proper—not necessary, because I am informed that they have already appointed two persons to attend the next gen. Conv; without an invitation—not proper; because it is publicly known they have adopted a Form of Church Government which renders them inadmissible as members of the Convention or Union.

Provoost then gave an account of the last New York convention, which had been held on November 5, 1788. In answer to a query from Bishop White, Provoost told him that the two resolutions passed were as follows:

That it is highly necessary in the opinion of this Convention that measures should be pursued to preserve the Episcopal Succession in the English Line, and

Resolved also That the union of the Prot: Episc: Ch: in the United States is of great importance and much to be desired; and that the delegates of this State in the next general Convention be instructed to promote that union by every prudent measure, consistent with the Constitution of the Church and the continuance of the Episcopal Succession in the English Line.<sup>3</sup>

It was true, as Bishop Provoost had heard, that Connecticut expected to be represented at the General Convention, having been invited to send a delegation by Bishop White. On April 10, 1789, Bishop Seabury wrote to Dr. Parker: "I believe we shall send two Clergymen to the Philadelphia Convention, to see whether a union can be effected. If it fail, the point will here be altogether given up." On June 4, 1789, Massachusetts and New Hampshire also decided to send a delegate. A meeting of the clergy was held, at which Dr. Parker was elected to represent both states.<sup>4</sup> At the same time, the Rev. Edward Bass was elected as Bishop of Massachusetts.<sup>5</sup> A letter, requesting his consecration by the three bishops then resident in the United States, was given to Dr. Parker for him to present to the Convention.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup>It was the second resolution which gave the New York delegation the opportunity to work for union with Connecticut, in spite of their bishop's objections. The clerical delegates present from New York were old friends of Seabury's: the Rev. Messrs Beach, Bloomer, and Moore.

<sup>4</sup>The paper appointing Parker to represent both states is in the Massachusetts Diocesan Library. It was so unusual for the clergy to meet without any lay representatives at this time in Massachusetts, that his election was challenged by the laity of Newburyport, though unsuccessfully. (Addison, *Life of Bass*, p. 289.)

<sup>5</sup>Bass resigned as bishop-elect soon after the General Convention of 1789, and was re-elected by a convention of clergy and laity in 1796. (Tiffany, *History*, p. 398.)

<sup>6</sup>Act of the Clergy of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, June 4, 1789, in Perry, *Journals* I, 70-71. A copy in Parker's handwriting is in the Massachusetts Diocesan Library.

The New England group intended to do all they could to effect a union.

In a letter to Bishop White, written June 9, 1789, Dr. Leaming reiterated the New England point of view. With three duly consecrated bishops in America, from lines of succession that had once been one, to send to England for a fourth was not only unnecessary, but might do irrevocable harm. He wrote:

Bishop Seabury has twenty Clergymen in this state, and a very respectable body of people under their care, who are true sons of the Church; and if any state should send to the English Bishops to consecrate a Bishop, it would cast such a face upon affairs, as would exclude all possibility of a union: for such a measure would not be adopted unless they designed to keep up a separation from us.

For Connecticut, the coming General Convention represented the last chance to effect a union, and Leaming, like Parker, ardently desired union, even if the hope of uniformity was abandoned. In spite of the fact that the Philadelphia group had been willing to drop two of the creeds, he was convinced that their doctrinal beliefs were still orthodox, and, he wrote, "I am not able to see why there may not be a general union, although we did not agree in every little circumstance." For Leaming, the requisites of union were two: recognition of Bishop Seabury, and agreement on the essential doctrines of the faith.

On June 18, 1789, Dr. Griffith informed Bishop White that, "in spite of the deplorable state of the Church" there, Virginia would be represented at the General Convention. He wrote that their last state convention had made

no alteration in the former appointm't of deputies to the General Convention, and, to show that I am not angry with them for neglecting their Bp. elect, and have not as some may expect,



quitted, in disgust, the cause of the Church, as well as to gratify a respectable Majority of its Members in this State, who wish, I believe, that I should represent them, and to keep from among you certain troublesome innovators, I have determined to go to the ensuing Conven'n.

The Church in Virginia, though numerous, was too weak to take any decisive action towards building a united Church in America, but at least it would again be represented at the General Convention.

By the end of June, 1789, Bishop Seabury had decided that, under the existing circumstances, it would be impossible for Connecticut to be represented at the General Convention. On June 20, 1789, he wrote a letter of explanation to Bishop White. He explained his delay in answering a letter received in December, 1788, as due to the fact that, in so important a matter as the question of uniting with the churches to the South, he had wanted to consult both his clergy and laity. Both groups had met in June, 1789. Of the lay convention, he reported:

They declined every interference in Church government or in reformation of Liturgies. They supposed the government of the Church to be fixed, and that they had no right to alter it by introducing a new power into it. They hoped the Old Liturgy would be retained, with little alteration; and that these matters, they thought, belonged to the Bishops and Clergy, and not to them. They therefore could send no delegates, though they wished for unity among the Churches, and for uniformity of worship. . . .

The clergy knew that, according to the constitution of the General Convention, they would not be permitted to represent Connecticut without lay delegates. Furthermore, they were unwilling to attend a meeting, "where the authority of their Bishop had been disputed by one Bishop, and probably

by his influence, by a number of others who were to compose the meeting." Bishop Seabury agreed with his clergy that he could do nothing towards union, as long as the validity of his orders was disputed by Bishop Provoost. He regretted the necessity they felt to complete the succession from England, as "nothing would tend so much to the unity and uniformity of our Churches as the three Bishops, now in the States joining in the consecration of a fourth." He then listed his objections to the Proposed Prayer Book, which were, in general, the same as those made by the English bishops: the omission of the two creeds, and the phrase from the third; the mutilating of the psalms; the omission of the sign of the cross in baptism. Of the communion office, he wrote: "The grand fault in that office is the deficiency of a more formal oblation of the elements, and of the invocation of the Holy Ghost to sanctify and bless them." As a revision to restore the primitive practice was already before them, in the minutes of the Convention of 1786, he hoped it would be accepted, as "it would do you more honour in the world, and contribute more to the union of the Churches than any other alterations you can make, and would restore the Holy Eucharist to its ancient dignity and efficacy." In closing, Seabury suggested again that he and the other two bishops, with as many clergy as they desired, meet on equal footing, in which case he was certain "everything might be settled to mutual satisfaction, without the preposterous method of ascertaining doctrines, &c. &c., by a majority of votes." In a postscript, he asked that his letter be presented to the Convention, and that he be informed of any action taken as promptly as possible, "as all our proceedings will be suspended till then." He also added, in a conciliatory vein, that, as he had no copy of their Proposed Book, his comments might be incorrect, and that he might have misunderstood the authority which they gave to their laymen. Seabury had done what he could to modify the issue of lay representation.

He had consulted his laity in convention on the subject. To clarify his position, he added in his postscript:

That the assent of the Laity should be given to the laws which affect them equally with the Clergy, I think is right, and I believe will be disputed nowhere, and the rights of the Laity we have no disposition to invade.

Though unwilling to compromise his basic convictions, Seabury had a very real desire for union.

On July 23, 1789, Bishop Seabury reiterated his reasons for not sending a delegation to the General Convention to Dr. William Smith. As long as there was a denial of his episcopal character, and as long as no delegation without lay representatives would be received, it was impossible for the Connecticut Church to attend. He continued:

The necessity of a union of all the Churches, and the disadvantages of the present disunion, we feel and lament equally with you: and I agree with you, that there may be a strong and efficacious union between Churches where the usages are different. I see not why it may not be so in this case, as soon as you have removed those obstructions which, while they remain, must prevent all possibility of uniting.

Seabury commented on how unfortunate it was that the other two bishops refused to join with him to consecrate a fourth. After pointing out that he had consulted his laity and was acting with their support, he concluded:

A great deal, my dear sir, will depend on the part you now act. The dread of alterations in the Liturgy here arises from the observation, that every review of the Liturgy has set the offices of the Church lower, and departed further from primitive practice and simplicity. . . . But if a uniformity of worship be aimed at, I know of no other method besides the one I

mentioned to Bishop W.—to leave the matter to the Bishops and the Clergy. It is their business; and if your Laity will not consent to it, they interfere out of their sphere.

Thus, before the General Convention met, both Bishop White and Dr. Smith were explicitly informed of the position of the absent Bishop Seabury.

Bishop Provoost was also absent from the Convention. On July 22, 1789, he wrote declining Bishop White's invitation to stay with him during the meetings, as having been "so much indisposed for some days past with a constant fever and violent headaches," that he had given up all idea of attending. He was not uneasy about being absent, as he had "every reason to think the Church in this State will be fully represented." The two resolutions passed by the New York convention of November 5, 1788, contained the necessary instructions for his delegates. Bishop Provoost did not realize that, of the two resolutions passed, the one with the anti-Seabury bias was far less important to the New York delegation than the one instructing them to promote the union of the churches.

The General Convention held in Christ Church, Philadelphia, from July 28 to August 8, 1789, was in many ways the most important gathering of members of the American Episcopal Church ever to meet.<sup>7</sup> Although Bishop White stated that very little business was transacted,<sup>8</sup> yet it was at this session that the obstacles to union were removed. The minutes of the Convention are surprisingly casual. The many arrivals and departures of the delegates were carefully noted, and also the outside events that engaged their attention and time. The meeting was unhurried and, as recorded in the Journal, harmonious. Some controversial points were avoided

<sup>7</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all references to the convention that follow are from the Minutes of the Convention, Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-86.

<sup>8</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

altogether; the discussion of liturgical revision, for example, was postponed from day to day, and finally left as unfinished business. Other problems were thrashed out in private discussions, "in the intervals of the meetings," as Bishop White put it.<sup>9</sup> Such discussions and debates as did occur at the business sessions were not entered in the Journal. However, by remembering what had gone before, and by supplementing the day by day records of the meeting, we can appreciate the tensions and the achievement of this first session of the General Convention of 1789.

As not enough delegates had arrived by July 28, 1789, the first meeting was held on July 29, 1789. Seventeen clergymen and fifteen laymen attended, representing the same seven states: New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and South Carolina. Bishop White, the only bishop present, automatically became the president of the meeting, in accordance with the regulation passed at the preceding Convention. The Hon. Francis Hopkinson was again chosen as secretary. Testimonials of the delegates were checked; the papers of consecration of Bishop White and Bishop Provoost were presented; and various committees were set up. Robert Andrews, lay delegate from Virginia, notified the Convention that Dr. Griffith had resigned as bishop-elect of that state, but that no new candidate had as yet been chosen. Dr. Griffith, who was in Philadelphia as a delegate, had been prevented from attending the meeting by a serious illness. It was learned that all the delegates had come authorized to ratify a general constitution for the Church, and a Book of Common Prayer.<sup>10</sup>

The meeting on July 30, 1789 began in routine fashion, and ended in triumph.<sup>11</sup> The names of late arrivals were entered in the minutes, and a committee was arranged to

<sup>9</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

<sup>10</sup> Minutes for July 29, 1789, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-69.

<sup>11</sup> Minutes for July 30, 1789, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 69-71.

review the constitution and "to recommend such alterations, additions, and amendments as they shall think necessary and proper." Then, "the subject of perpetuating the succession from England, with the relation which it bore to the question of embracing that from the Scotch Episcopacy, was brought into view by a measure of the clergy in Massachusetts and New-Hampshire."<sup>12</sup> Bishop White read the letter, which had been sent to him by Dr. Parker, in which the clergy from Massachusetts and New Hampshire requested that the three duly consecrated bishops resident in the United States unite in consecrating the Rev. Edward Bass as bishop of Massachusetts. They explained that, besides wanting "the benefit and advantage" of a bishop, they sought "to encourage and promote, as far as in us lies, a union of the whole Episcopal Church in these States, and to perfect and compact this mystical body of Christ."<sup>13</sup> As president, Bishop White laid the letter before the convention

intimating his sincere wish to join in such measures as they might adopt, for the forming of a permanent union with the churches in the eastern states, but at the same time expressing his doubt of its being consistent with the faith impliedly pledged to the English prelates, to proceed to any consecration without first obtaining from them the number held in their Church to be canonically necessary to such an act.<sup>14</sup>

Bishop White knew that this point of view was shared by Bishop Provoost, and, according to his *Memoirs*, it "was duly respected by the body, while they manifested an earnest desire of the union alluded to."<sup>15</sup> Bishop Seabury's letters to Bishop White and Dr. Smith were presented next, with a remarkable result. According to the Minutes:

<sup>12</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>13</sup> Act of the Clergy of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, June 4, 1789. (Mass. Dio. Lib.)

<sup>14</sup> White, *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Upon reading the said letters, it appearing that Bishop Seabury lay under some misapprehensions concerning an entry in the Minutes of a former Convention, as intending some doubt of the validity of his consecration,

Resolved unanimously,—That is it the opinion of this Convention, that the consecration of the Right Rev. Dr. Seabury to the Episcopal office is valid.

One of the main obstacles to union had been overcome. Having taken this drastic step towards a united Church, in the absence of Bishop Provoost, the meeting adjourned.

The critical question, raised by the request for the consecration of Bass, continued to hang fire. On July 31, 1789, time was gained for the private discussion of the problem, as the business of the Convention was interrupted by the commencement exercises of the University of Pennsylvania.<sup>16</sup> After a brief session, at which three late arrivals were received as delegates, the entire Convention "went in procession to the German Reformed Church . . . to attend the Commencement." At a short afternoon meeting, a committee was appointed "to prepare a body of Canons for the government of this Church," and it was agreed to discuss liturgical revisions on the following Monday, August 3, 1789. It was further agreed to turn the Convention into a committee of the whole, at their next session on August 1, 1789, for the consideration of the application of the clergy of Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

Before the consecration of Bass was discussed, however, two more obstacles to union had been removed. When the meeting of August 1, 1789, convened, Dr. Smith was ready to present the proposed church constitution, as revised by the committee appointed for that purpose. The constitution was read through twice, and then debated, paragraph by paragraph.<sup>17</sup> Two changes in the constitution, as proposed at the

<sup>16</sup> Minutes of July 31, 1789, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>17</sup> Minutes of August 1, 1789, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 72-73.

Philadelphia Convention of 1786, were made which eased the issue of lay representation. Article 2 was restated: though both clergy and lay delegates were expected to attend the Triennial General Conventions, if any state appointed only one type of delegate, "such State shall nevertheless be considered as duly represented by such Deputy or Deputies as may attend, whether lay or clerical."<sup>18</sup> Article 3 of the earlier constitution, which required every state to have a convention of both clergy and lay deputies, was omitted entirely.<sup>19</sup> Connecticut would be received in General Convention, with or without lay representatives.

One further revision was adopted in the effort to promote union. Article 5, to which Bishop Seabury had strongly objected, was entirely changed. Instead of considering the bishops as members *ex officio* of the Conventions, two governing bodies were established: a House of Bishops, and a House of Lay and Clerical Deputies, to begin as soon as there were three or more bishops in the American Church. The bishops were to constitute "a House of revision; and when any proposed act shall have passed in the General Convention, the same shall be transmitted to the House of revision for their concurrence."<sup>20</sup> A veto from the bishops could be overruled by the vote of three-fifths of the House of Deputies. This coincided with Bishop White's conviction that the final authority in government must reside in a representative body. In his *Memoirs*, he stated that he had had very little to do with the committee on the constitution

being desirous, that whatever additional powers it might be thought necessary to assign to the bishops, such powers should not lie under the reproach of having been pressed for by one

<sup>18</sup> A General Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, accepted August 8, 1789, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-85.

<sup>19</sup> A General Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, proposed June 23, 1786, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-42.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Article 3 of the constitution of August, 1789, which replaced Article 5 of the earlier constitution.



of the number, but be the result of due deliberation, and the free choice of all orders of persons within the Church, and given with a view to her good government.<sup>21</sup>

In spite of the fact that Bishop White's concept of episcopacy was no closer than before to the concept held in Connecticut, with the altering of Article 5 of the earlier constitution, one more barrier to union was removed.

The consideration of the application for the consecration of the Rev. Edward Bass was begun at the end of the session of Saturday, August 1, 1789, but was left incomplete. Again time was gained for private discussion, as no meeting was scheduled on Sunday, and the sessions of Monday and Tuesday were interrupted by the death of Dr. David Griffith. When the delegates reconvened on Monday, August 3, 1789, they were informed of his death. Bishop White was not present as Dr. Griffith had been his guest. Dr. Smith was elected president *pro tempore*. The entire session was devoted to planning the funeral service to be held the next day.<sup>22</sup> On August 4, 1789, the Convention adjourned to Bishop White's house for the funeral services. Dr. Smith was appointed to preach.

At four o'clock, the delegates reconvened. The question of liturgical revision was raised and again postponed. The rest of the day was devoted to discussing the answer to be sent to the Massachusetts request for a bishop.<sup>23</sup>

The extent to which the application for the consecration of the Rev. Edward Bass had been discussed, while the business sessions of the Convention had been suspended, is revealed in Bishop White's *Memoirs*.<sup>24</sup> The letter of application had been promoted largely by Dr. Parker, and its primary purpose was to bring the clergy of Connecticut and those of

<sup>21</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>22</sup> Minutes of August 3, 1789, in Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

<sup>23</sup> Minutes of August 4, 1789, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.

<sup>24</sup> All the references in this paragraph are from White, *op. cit.*, pp. 141-143.

the federal group together. White noted that the Convention, "from the beginning, manifested a strong desire of complying with it." White had concurred in the motion upholding the validity of Bishop Seabury's orders, and, having a great respect for majority opinion, he expected Bishop Provoost to agree. He wrote:

Bishop Provoost, although he did not appear to be possessed of personal ill-will to Bishop Seabury, was opposed to having any thing to do with the Scotch succession, which he did not hesitate to pronounce irregular. Yet he was little supported in this sentiment; and least of all, by the clergy of his own diocese. It was therefore natural to infer, that he would see the expediency of what was the general wish, or at least to waive his objection for the sake of peace; as indeed happened.

Nevertheless, Bishop White was determined that there was to be no consecration in America without three bishops of the English succession. Consequently he found himself

in a very delicate situation; standing alone as he did in the business, and as president of the assembled body. Many speeches were made, which implied, that the result of the deliberation must involve the acquiescence of the two bishops of the English line; while it was thought by the only one of them present, that no determination of theirs would warrant the breach of his faith impliedly pledged, as he apprehended, in consequence of measures taken by a preceding convention.

As president, he was not free to argue his point in the regular sessions of the Convention. Instead, in private conversations, he explained to several delegates "the difficulty under which he lay," insisting that they were all bound by their promise to the English bishops in the letter sent by the Convention of 1786. In reply, "they urged the necessity, which they thought the Church under." However, as a result of

these conferences, a concession was made to Bishop White's point of view in the meetings that followed.

On August 5, 1789, "in order to bring the business before them to a conclusion," Dr. Smith presented to the Convention five resolutions which were accepted as the official reply to the clergy of Massachusetts and New Hampshire.<sup>25</sup> The general tenor of the resolutions was strongly in favor of union. The first two declared that a complete order of bishops existed in America, "fully competent to every proper act and duty of the Episcopal office and character in these United States." The third stated that it was their duty to assist their sister churches in every way, and, therefore, in the fourth, the two bishops in the English line were formally requested to join Bishop Seabury in the consecration of the Rev. Edward Bass. It was suggested that, before the bishops complied

it be proposed to the Churches in the New England States to meet the Churches of these states, with the said three Bishops, in an adjourned Convention, to settle certain articles of union and discipline among all the Churches, previous to such consecration.

The last resolution showed the effect of Bishop White's conversations. It read as follows:

Resolved,—That if any difficulty or delicacy, in respect to the Archbishops and Bishops of England, shall remain with the Right Rev. Drs. White and Provoost, or either of them, concerning their compliance with the above request, this Convention will address the Archbishops and Bishops, and hope thereby to remove the difficulty.

Though Bishop White was glad that the Convention had recognized his difficulty, he thought it foolish to ask an opin-

<sup>25</sup> Minutes of August 5, 1789, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 74-76.

ion from the English bishops, who were legally bound to disapprove.<sup>26</sup> However, he welcomed the delay. The five resolutions, all expressing the strong will-to-union of the Convention, were unanimously passed.

The last three days of the Convention were spent in writing out and signing the various measures and letters that had been voted. The first letter written was to George Washington, recently elected president of the United States.<sup>27</sup> Like Bishop Seabury's letter to the governor of Connecticut, this letter seemed to be sent partly from the desire to remain on friendly terms with the civil authorities, and partly from the deep-rooted Anglican tradition of the close relation between church and state. Yet the two letters were as different as could be. Seabury's was sent to notify the governor officially of the acts of the Church in his state; the letter from the Convention was sent to congratulate Washington on his election to the presidency and, in passing, on his being a loyal Episcopalian.

On August 7, 1789, a beginning was made of the body of canons for the American Church, which, in general, followed the English ones.<sup>28</sup> The first stated that there should always be three orders in the ministry: bishops, priests, and deacons. Bishops-elect, according to the second canon, would be required to have the same two testimonials the English prelates had required: one from the convention of his own state, and one from the General Convention. The third required the bishop to make regular and frequent visits to his churches, to discipline his clergy and to administer "the apostolic rite of Confirmation." The next five canons dealt with ordination. In this connection there was an American innovation: the

<sup>26</sup> White, *op. cit.*

<sup>27</sup> Convention of 1789, Letter to George Washington, August 7, 1789, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-133.

<sup>28</sup> Canons for the Government of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-82.

standing committee, which Canon 7 required be appointed by each state, to recommend candidates. Each standing committee served as the interim authority for its state convention and, after bishops had been secured, as a check on episcopal authority. The last canon prohibited any but ordained clergy from officiating in an Episcopal church. When these canons had been duly ratified, "whereas it appears that sundry other Canons are necessary for the good government of the Church," a committee to work on additional canons was appointed.

On August 8, 1789, the committee, appointed by the convention to write the English archbishops on the subject of the consecration of Bass by Bishops White, Provoost, and Seabury, reported. The letter they had composed was approved, engrossed, and signed by the Convention.<sup>29</sup> When sent to England, it was to include all the minutes and proceedings of the Convention. Though not in sympathy with approaching the English archbishops on this question, Bishop White signed the letter officially, as president of the Convention. This was the last meeting of the summer session of the Convention of 1789. The explanation given for their seven week adjournment was as follows:

. . . upon the consideration of certain communications from the Bishop and Clergy of the Church in Connecticut, and from the Clergy in the Churches of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, it was resolved to adjourn to the 29th day of September following, in order to meet the said Churches, for the purpose of settling articles of union discipline, uniformity of worship, and general government of all the Churches in the United States.<sup>30</sup>

Determined to promote the union of the churches, the Convention ended with a conciliatory resolution of a differ-

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86. The letter is given, as an appendix, pp. 134-139.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 92. From the Preface of the Adjourned Convention of 1789.

ent kind: the absent Bishop Provoost was invited to open the September session of the Convention of 1789 with a sermon.

Within eight days of the close of the August session of the Convention, Bishop Seabury had been informed of its proceedings from three different sources. Bishop White was the first to write. His letter, dated August 11, 1789, stated that he was looking forward to discussing in person the matters that had been raised between them, as he could not "for a moment suppose that you will see cause to decline ye unanimous invitation which you will herewith receive from ye Convention to their adjourned meeting." He was afraid that Bishop Seabury might misunderstand the obligation he felt to the English bishops, which seemed to stand in the way of the union they both desired. The first draft of his letter made the blunt statement that he wanted to be free without delay to join Bishop Seabury in the consecration of Bass, but the letter as sent was less specific. In proof of his acceptance of the validity of Bishop Seabury's orders, Bishop White recommended for elevation to the priesthood a young man he had ordained deacon and who had moved to Connecticut. In a postscript he explained that, as Bishop Provoost had already been invited to stay with him, it had been arranged for Bishop Seabury to stay in Philadelphia with Dr. Smith.

On August 16, 1789, the committee appointed by the Convention wrote to Bishop Seabury to inform him of the proceedings of their August session and to invite him to attend their reconvened session in September. They enclosed the records of the Convention, calling his attention especially to the actions taken to promote union. Connecticut could now be officially represented in General Convention without lay delegates, as each state was free to determine the type of representation it desired, by the second article of the amended constitution. The resolution, declaring the Convention's unanimous recognition of the validity of Bishop Seabury's

orders, would prevent any further misunderstandings on that score. "The last and greatest proof" of their respect and their desire for union lay in the fact that the Convention had been adjourned expressly to invite the New England churches to join them. For the sake of convenience, the day for reconvening had been set one week before the Corporation for the Relief of Widows and Orphans (of which Bishop Seabury was a member) was to meet in Philadelphia. Also, they explained

an early day was necessary, as the members from some of the Southern States could neither be detained long from home, nor return to their respective charges, with any prospect of attending at any more remote day, during the present year.

They concluded their cordial invitation with the hope that they would soon hear that he would attend the adjourned Convention, with "such representation of your Church as your own rules may provide."

A letter to Bishop Seabury from Dr. Smith, written on the same day, gave more insight into the actions of the Convention. Dr. Smith reported that the hope of union had been promoted by Bishop Seabury's letter, with its "*healing and charitable idea* of 'an efficacious union and communion in all Essentials of Doctrine, as well as Discipline, notwithstanding some differences in the usages of the Churches.'" The real foundation for union had been laid, according to Dr. Smith, in the five resolutions, presented by him and passed by the Convention, in answer to the application for the consecration of the Rev. Edward Bass. That matter, he said, had engaged the attention of the Convention for five days

and though a desire of union was every where evident among the members, yet much difficulty and variety of sentiment and apprehension prevailed as to the means, in-so-far that there appeared more than a probability of coming to no decision.

On August 4, 1789, Dr. Smith had asked for a postponement of the matter, promising to bring in a proposal that would satisfy them all. Of the result, on August 5, 1789, he wrote

and I shall ever rejoice in it as the happiest incident of my life, and the best service I have ever been able to render to our Church, that the Resolves which were offered the next morning were unanimously and almost instantly adopted, as reconciling every sentiment, and removing every difficulty which had before appeared to obstruct a general union.

To Dr. Smith, the most important of the resolutions was the fourth, which he described to Bishop Seabury as "inviting you through the door so widely opened, to meet us in the Convention at Philadelphia, adjourned for that end to Sept'r 29th." Smith tried to offset any offense that Bishop Seabury might have taken to Bishop White's position, by writing at length of White's cooperativeness and his zeal for union. Among other things, he had recommended that the College of Philadelphia, of which Dr. Smith was again the head, grant the degree of Doctor of Divinity to the Rev. Messers Bass and Parker, as "a proper compliment to the New England Churches." If the Venerable Mr. Leaming accompanied Bishop Seabury to the Convention, he would "receive that compliment from us in person, if he has no where else received it before." Smith repeated that he was looking forward with pleasure to having Bishop Seabury as a house guest, adding that his only other guest would be the Rev. Benjamin Moore of New York, a long time friend and supporter of the Connecticut bishop.

During the same week, the letter of the Convention to the English archbishops had been mailed, accompanied by the full reports of the Convention and by a personal letter from Bishop White to the Archbishop of Canterbury.<sup>31</sup> Both letters

<sup>31</sup> Minutes of the Meeting of the Convention Committee, August 14, 1789, in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 397 ff.



told of the request from New England, and of Bishop White's reluctance to consecrate until there were three bishops in the English line in America, because of his sense of obligation to them. However, the bishop made clear his desire to cooperate, writing

that if in ye issue it should appear, from respect to ye Convention, as I wish it may, either that I am released from my obligations, or that I have been mistaken in ye supposing of them, there is neither principle nor personal considerations that can for a moment prevent my joining in ye solicited consecration. On ye contrary, all my endeavours have tended to an union with our Eastern Brethren, still in consistency with the completing of ye succession from England.

No answer was received to either letter, for, as Bishop White had foreseen, the English prelates were not in a position either to repudiate or to recognize the Scottish orders.

Bishop Seabury responded to the information he had received of the Convention in two brief notes. In the first, to Dr. Parker, he commented unfavorably on the actions of the Convention in regard to the application for the consecration of Bass. He wrote:

The Rev. Dr. Moore, of New York, informs me the application was referred to the Convention, and directions given to write to the English Bishops for their opinion. These steps to me look queer, and shew a degree of thralldom, both to the Convention and English Archbishops that ought not to be.

Nevertheless, having received the proper official invitation to the adjourned Convention, he would accept, and hoped Parker would. On the following day, August 27, 1789, Bishop Seabury wrote a letter of acceptance to Bishop White.

Beginning at this time, a series of angry letters was sent to Bishop White by Bishop Provoost. In the first, August 26,

1789, he berated the New York delegates for having grossly deviated from their instructions

which were worded with their consent, and at my particular request, in a manner that was intended to prevent their accession to any scheme of union, which might be purchased at the expense of the general constitution, which had been ratified in the Church of New York since my return from Europe, or which might endanger the preservation of the succession of our Bishops in the English line.

He added that no "absolution" from the English prelates could change his principles. In his second letter, September 7, 1789, Bishop Provoost enlarged on his contention that the Convention had no authority to abrogate the principle of lay representation, previously ratified. He added:

As to what you style an implied engagement to the English Bishops, I look upon it, in regard to myself, as a positive one. I entered into it, *Ex Animo*, upon principle; and do not wish to ask or accept a releasement from it.

In a third letter, September 15, 1789, Bishop Provoost developed his points at greater length, stressing in particular his objection to the conduct of the delegates from New York, saying:

I again enclose a copy of the instructions to the New-York delegates, which it may perhaps be proper for you to lay before the Convention, as I shall not think myself bound by any proceedings of said delegates which run counter to the tenor of their instructions.

From a letter written by Dr. Parker to his brother-in-law, we learn that, in the vehemence of his opposition to any union

with Bishop Seabury, Bishop Provoost had even stirred up trouble in Massachusetts.<sup>32</sup>

In spite of the short notice, both New England groups held meetings before going to Philadelphia. On September 7, 1789, the Massachusetts and New Hampshire clergy met at Newburyport. In their instructions<sup>33</sup> to their representative, Dr. Parker, they made four points: he was to procure a negative for the bishops on all proceedings, procure trial by their peers for the bishops, procure union with the Connecticut Church, and permit as little alteration as possible in the liturgy. They also sent a letter to Bishop White, repeating the same points, adding

and give us leave Sir, to observe that the terms upon which we agreed to submit to our Bishop were, that he should be consecrated by the present three Bishops. Should this much desired event fail to take place our intentions will be frustrated in great measure.

The Connecticut clergy met on September 15, 1789, at Stratfield.<sup>34</sup> In the absence of their bishop, Dr. Leaming was chosen president. The letters and documents from Philadelphia were presented first. It was decided to send clerical delegates only, and the Rev. Bela Hubbard and the Rev. Abraham Jarvis were duly elected. Thus, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire planned to be officially represented at the reconvened Convention of 1789.

The reconvening of the General Convention had been set for September 29, 1789, but it was necessary to delay one day to await the arrival of an adequate number of delegates. Dur-

<sup>32</sup> Parker, Letter to his brother-in-law, September 27, 1789, quoted in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 412-413

<sup>33</sup> Massachusetts and New Hampshire clergy, Instructions to Parker, September 8, 1789. (Mass. Dio. Lib.)

<sup>34</sup> Beardsley, *op. cit.*, pp. 367-368.

ing the day, on the arrival of the New England delegation, "a danger arose from an unexpected question . . . on the score of politics."<sup>35</sup> Having heard that Bishop Seabury was receiving half pay from England, as an ex-chaplain, two lay deputies "entertained scruples in regard to the propriety of admitting him as a member of the convention." Fortunately, one of them talked in private with Bishop White, who pointed out that the pay was received only for former services. As there was nothing in the civil law to prevent Bishop Seabury from enjoying the full rights of citizenship, it seemed unnecessary for the Church to be "over-righteous" on that score. The objection was dropped, without ever being officially raised, much to Bishop White's relief.

The General Convention of 1789 reconvened on September 30, in Christ Church, Philadelphia. As Bishop Provoost was absent, and Bishop Seabury present only to confer, Bishop White presided, *ex officio*.<sup>36</sup> The credentials of the New England delegation, including Bishop Seabury's consecration papers, were presented, accepted, and duly recorded.<sup>37</sup> Three minor motions were passed: that Mr. Hopkinson be permitted the assistance of a professional secretary; that the business sessions be limited to the hours 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.; and that the matter of union be discussed by the Convention as a committee of the whole on the following day.

The second session, on October 1, 1789, was also a quiet one.<sup>38</sup> Several late arrivals and the new secretary were received. It was decided to ask for permission to meet in the State House, as the facilities of Christ Church were inadequate for the number of delegates present. Then, instead of

<sup>35</sup> See White, *Memoirs*, p. 145, for the account of these events.

<sup>36</sup> Minutes of the Convention for September 30, 1789, in Perry, *Journals*, I, 93-94.

<sup>37</sup> The papers presented by Bishop Seabury are given in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-144.

<sup>38</sup> The minutes for this meeting are found in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-95.

throwing the whole Convention into a discussion of the problem of union, it was resolved:

That for the better promotion of an union of this Church with the eastern Churches, the General Constitution established at the last session of this Convention is yet open to amendment and alterations, by virtue of the powers delegated to this Convention.<sup>39</sup>

For this purpose a committee, consisting of Dr. William Smith, the Rev. Robert Smith, the Rev. Benjamin Moore, and two laymen, was appointed to confer with the New England delegates. Thus issues, which might have caused dissension, were thrashed out in committee, and not on the convention floor.

The climax in the reorganization of the Church of England in America as an American Church, came on October 2, 1789.<sup>40</sup> The Convention met, as planned, in the State House, and in this new meeting place, a new life for the Church was begun. Following the opening prayers, Dr. Smith reported for the committee which had met with the New England delegation to discuss the church constitution. The New Englanders were prepared to accept the constitution if one modification was made. Dr. Smith reported:

That they have had a full, free, and friendly conference with the Deputies of the said Churches, who, on behalf of the Church in their several States, and by virtue of sufficient authority from them, have signified that they do not object to the Constitution which was approved at the former session of this Convention, if the third article of that Constitution may be so modified as to declare explicitly the right of Bishops, when sitting in a separate House, to originate and propose acts for

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 94-95.

<sup>40</sup> The minutes for this session are found in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-97.

the concurrence of the other House of Convention, and to negative such acts proposed by the other House as they may disapprove.

Dr. Smith recommended that the Convention agree to the change

conceiving this alteration to be desirable in itself, as having a tendency to give greater stability to the Constitution, without diminishing any security that is now possessed by the Clergy or Laity; and being sincerely impressed with the importance of an union to the future prosperity of the Church. . . .

If the alteration were made, the New England delegates agreed to "subscribe the Constitution, and become members of this General Convention." It was an exciting moment, with union so near, and yet still uncertain. By special request, the report was reread, and then debated. The result was a compromise: it was agreed to give the bishops the right to originate and propose acts, but they were denied a full veto. A negative from the House of Bishops could be overruled by a four-fifths vote of the other house. Bishop White recalled

that from the sentiments expressed in the debate, there is reason to believe that the full negative would have been allowed, had not Mr. Andrews, from Virginia, very seriously, and doubtless very sincerely, expressed his apprehension, that it was so far beyond what was expected by the Church in his state, as would cause the measure to be there disowned.<sup>41</sup>

As Mr. Andrews had been working hard for union, his apprehensions were taken seriously. The full negative for the bishops was denied, but it was agreed that the matter be raised again in a later Convention, after instructions had been received from the state conventions. In his *Memoirs*,

<sup>41</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

Bishop White commented that the case of Mr. Andrews was "a strong proof of the laxity in regard to due order and discipline, under which it was necessary to begin the organization of the Church." Bishop Seabury and his deputies "acquiesced, but reluctantly, in this compromise," not because they feared so improbable a vote, but because "they thought that the frame of ecclesiastical government could hardly be called Episcopal, while such a matter was held out as speculatively possible."<sup>42</sup> Their acquiescence, even though reluctant, meant that union had been achieved. A simple piece of paper, with one sentence and four signatures, was the symbol. It read: "We do hereby agree to the Constitution of the Church, as modified this day in Convention," and was signed by Bishop Seabury, the Rev. Messers Jarvis and Hubbard for Connecticut, and by the Rev. Dr. Parker for Massachusetts and New Hampshire.<sup>43</sup> The new members of the Convention took their seats, and Dr. Parker and the Rev. Mr. Jarvis were added to the committee on revising the canons, before the meeting adjourned.

On October 3, 1789, a brief meeting of the Convention was held.<sup>44</sup> Union being an achieved fact, Bishop White read the letters of protest from Bishop Provoost, as he had been instructed to do. They were received without comment. The meeting broke up into two houses, "agreeably to the Constitution." At this first session of the House of Deputies, the bishops remained as hearers, presumably seated at the right of the newly elected president, Dr. William Smith.<sup>45</sup> The most important matter of business remaining was the issuance of a Book of Common Prayer for the American Church. For this purpose four committees were appointed by the House of Deputies, each to deal with separate sections. At the begin-

<sup>42</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

<sup>43</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

<sup>44</sup> The minutes for this session are found in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 97 and 103.

<sup>45</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 146-148. The description of the day is from this source, unless otherwise noted.

ning a difficulty occurred in a question of principle. As spokesman for the New England group, Dr. Parker proposed that "the English book should be the ground of the proceedings held, without reference to that set out and proposed in 1785." In reaction, it was resolved "that a liturgy ought to be formed, without reference to any existing book, although with liberty to take from any, whatever the convention should think fit." Bishop White objected to this procedure as "very unreasonable; because the different congregations of the Church were always understood to be possessed of a liturgy, before the consecration of her bishops, or the existence of her conventions." Even during the Revolution, he pointed out, the clergy had remained bound to the English Prayer Book, though the political parts had to be changed. The question under debate was whether the committees were to prepare the forms of service or to revise them. According to White, they should have undertaken to revise the English Book, using the Proposed Book as a source of suggested alterations. He said:

Certain it is, that the extreme proposed tended very much to the opposite extreme, which took effect—an evident implication in all the proceedings of the house, that there were no forms of prayer, no offices, and no rubrics, until they should be formed by the convention now assembled.

This assumption tended to negate the bishops' right of veto, for if they objected to some change, the result would be "not that the prayer, or whatever else it were, remained as before, but that no such matter were to be inserted." Whole offices of the Church might be lost. The bishops "reasoned and expostulated on the point, with several of the gentlemen, to no purpose." Bishop White's principle was defeated, and the committees were instructed to prepare the various services.<sup>46</sup>

The House of Deputies

<sup>46</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 103.



would not allow that there was any book of authority in existence: a mode of proceeding, in which they have acted differently from the conventions before and after them: who have recognized the contrary principle when any matter occurred to which it was applicable.

The Convention adjourned until the following Monday.

On Monday, October 5, 1789, the Convention met for the first time in two houses: the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. Each house kept its own Journal, but though they debated for two weeks to produce the first official American Prayer Book, both recorded only the topics discussed each day.<sup>47</sup> In spite of the previous disagreement in theory, in actual fact both houses followed the order of the English Prayer Book in their discussions, beginning with Morning and Evening Prayer, and ending with the occasional services. For an insight into the areas that were the most vigorously disputed, we must turn to Bishop White's *Memoirs*.<sup>48</sup>

In connection with the review of the morning and evening prayer services, two issues were raised. The first was the question of retaining the Athanasian Creed. Bishop Seabury believed that the retention of the creed was a necessity, as a protection against heresy. Though Bishop White disagreed, and never intended to use it himself, he agreed to make it "an amendment to the draft sent by the other house; to be inserted with a rubric, permitting the use of it." However, the amendment was vetoed in the House of Deputies

and when the subject afterward came up in conference, they would not allow of the creed in any shape; which was thought intolerant by the gentlemen from New-England: who, with Bishop Seabury, gave it up with great reluctance.

<sup>47</sup> The Minutes of the House of Deputies, from October 5 through October 16, 1789, are given in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 104-113. The Minutes of the House of Bishops for the same period are given in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-123.

<sup>48</sup> The following discussion of the disputed areas, unless otherwise indicated, is from White, *Memoirs*, pp. 149-155.

The second point of dispute in connection with morning prayer concerned the phrase "He descended into hell," in the Apostles' Creed. Both bishops wanted the phrase retained, though for different reasons. Bishop Seabury earnestly believed "that the article was put into the creed, in opposition to the Apollinarian heresy; and that, therefore, the withdrawing of it was an indirect encouragement of the same." Bishop White was one of those

who, while they thought but little of the importance of inserting such an article, were yet of the opinion, that the convention stood pledged, on the present subject, to the English bishops: it being the only one on which they had laid much stress, in stating the terms on which they were willing to consecrate for our Church; and we having complied with their wishes, in that respect. This would seem very unsuitably followed by a repetition of the offensive measure, or something very like it, in the first convention held after the consecration had been obtained.

The bishops added an explanatory rubric declaring that the phrase referred to the "state of the dead, generally." The House of Deputies presented the phrase "in italics and between hooks, with a rubric permitting the use of the words—'He went into the place of departed spirits.'" It had been agreed that any proposal originating with the bishops, that was not protested by the deputies, would be considered as accepted.<sup>49</sup> As no objection was made to the bishops, Bishop White assumed that their version had passed, but Bishop Seabury feared a misunderstanding. When Bishop White met with the committee who were preparing the Prayer Book for the press, he discovered that, by accident, the bishops' proposal had not been presented to the deputies. The committee contended "that the amendment made by the bishops to the service as proposed in their house, not appearing to have

<sup>49</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 122.

been presented; the service must stand as proposed by them." Bishop White argued "that the creed, as in the English book, must be considered as the creed of the Church, until altered by the consent of both houses; which was not yet done." In the first edition the committee had their way.

The Psalms, which as part of Morning and Evening Prayer were considered next, caused trouble. The House of Deputies made a selection of their own, to be inserted as a possible alternative to the English system of reading through all the psalms each month. Bishop Seabury was indifferent on the subject, "knowing, that neither himself nor any of his clergy would make use of the alternative, but that they would adhere to the old practice." Bishop White recommended that each minister make his own selection. The psalms would then be chosen for their suitability to specific circumstances, "and yet, not hazard such capricious omissions of particular passages as might be construed by some into disrespectful treatment of holy writ." Again the deputies had their way, the bishops having to content themselves by adding to the new selection a few of the more beautiful psalms that had been overlooked.

Bishop Seabury was especially interested in the restoration of the prayer of consecration in the communion office, with the oblatory words and the invocation of the Holy Spirit, which had been omitted from the English Prayer Book since the reign of Edward VI. He felt so strongly on the subject that he declined the invitation to consecrate the elements at the service on a Sunday morning during the session (October 11, 1789). With a smile he said: "To confess the truth, I hardly consider the form to be used, as strictly amounting to a consecration." Though not agreeing that the familiar form was defective, Bishop White defended the ancient forms, as beautiful and free of superstition. He pointed out that the prayer of consecration had been used in the first English Prayer Book, and had been dropped later "at the

instance of two learned foreigners." The slight opposition that there was to the restoration of the consecratory prayer "was counteracted by some pertinent remarks of the president." In the first American Prayer Book, two changes were made from the Scottish form issued by Bishop Seabury in 1786. In the invocation, the words "that they may become the body and blood of Thy most dearly beloved Son," were changed to read "and vouchsafe so to bless and sanctify these thy Creatures of Bread and Wine that we receiving them . . ." as suggested by the Maryland Convention of 1786.<sup>50</sup> Nor was the Scottish order, which placed the Intercession, the Lord's Prayer, and the penitential preparations for Communion after the Consecration, adopted. When the first American Prayer Book was issued, there was a mistake which threatened to cause trouble. To avoid writing out the entire office, the bishops used a copy of the Scottish liturgy, on which they had indicated the alterations they wanted. When printed, the words "which we now offer unto thee" were in a different type, a fact which was interpreted by some as indicating a superstitious point of view. As this had occurred entirely by accident, it was corrected in the next printing. Thus, Bishop Seabury's promise was fulfilled and the primitive form of consecratory prayer was preserved in the American, as well as in the Scottish Church.

According to Bishop White, the rest of the business of revision went smoothly. No changes of any importance were made in the occasional services, as there was little difference of opinion. The canons, as published by the last Convention, were reviewed and a few additions made, which "passed in the other house almost the same as they were drawn up and sent to them by the bishops."<sup>51</sup> On the last day of the Convention, the bishops proposed a ratification of the Thirty-nine Articles, "with an exception in regard to the thirty-

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Smith, Letter to White, April 9, 1786.

<sup>51</sup> The canons as passed are given in Perry, *Journals I*, 125-130.

sixth and thirty-seventh articles,"<sup>52</sup> but these "with the concurrence of the House of Bishops, were referred to a future Convention."<sup>53</sup> Bishop Seabury at this time thought it unwise to adopt any articles, "it being presumed by him, that all necessary doctrine should be comprehended in the liturgy." Bishop White, however

professed himself an advocate for articles, the abolishing of which would, he thought, only leave with every pastor of a congregation the right of judging of orthodoxy, according to his discretion or his prejudices, while the articles determine that matter by a rule, issuing from the public authority of the Church.<sup>54</sup>

Although he did not think the English articles perfect, White thought it wise to change only the local application of the political parts, nor would he require candidates for the ministry to sign them. Having learned the advantage of preliminary discussions on debatable issues, he did not mind deferring action on the articles to a later Convention.

On October 16, 1789, the last day of the Convention, the House of Deputies appointed two committees to carry on the work of the Convention after adjournment. The first was a committee to superintend the printing of the Prayer Book. It was composed of two laymen and three clergymen, all of Philadelphia, who were to confer with Bishop White. The second, a larger and more representative group, was to serve as the standing committee until the next Convention. They had the authority to recommend that the bishops call special meetings if necessary.<sup>55</sup> The standing committee was urged to recommend any duly elected and qualified candidates for

<sup>52</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, p. 111.

<sup>53</sup> The minutes for this session, on which this account is based, are found in Perry, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-113.

<sup>54</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 166.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* The bishops could call the extra meetings without any such recommendation, if they so desired.

consecration by Bishops Seabury, White, and Provoost, provided the English archbishops approved, as "it is the will and desire of the General Convention, that such consecration should, as soon as convenient, take place." As their main concern was to complete an American Episcopate, they added, "That, should the answer from England be unfavourable, or any obstacle occur, by the death of either of the three Bishops, or otherwise, the said Committee shall recommend any Bishop elect to England, for consecration." The "or otherwise" suggests the doubt that must have been felt of Bishop Provoost's consenting to act with Bishop Seabury. Also, perhaps to prevent his remaining aloof the next Convention was scheduled for New York City.

The fall session of the General Convention of 1789, at which the union of the federal and ecclesiastical groups was achieved, was less dramatic than the summer session, which had prepared the way. Meetings were held at regular hours every week day, except, for some unexplained reason, Wednesday, October 7, 1789. Only a few delegates arrived late. They were a hard working group of men. On the last week, the meetings had to be moved from the State House to make way for a civil assembly, but they were transferred to the College of Philadelphia without any loss of time. Issues were freely debated without disrupting the newly achieved union. Of the House of Bishops, Bishop White wrote that

owing to the smallness of the number and a disposition in both of them to accomodate, business was despatched with great celerity; as must be seen by any one who attends to the progress of the subjects recorded in the journal. To this day, there are recollected with satisfaction, the hours which were spent with Bishop Seabury on the important subjects which came before them; and especially the Christian temper which he manifested all along.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

The House of Deputies, too, retained a basic harmony in spite of outspoken differences of opinion. The result was the achievement of what so short a time before had seemed impossible: the two groups of churchmen were united under one constitution and had agreed on an official Book of Common Prayer.

It would be misleading to conclude our study of the year 1789 as though the Convention had resolved all difficulties. A letter to Bishop Seabury written in December, 1789, by Bishop White reveals that even he was uneasy under the new form of church government. The immediate cause of the letter was the fact that the phrase "He descended into hell" had been printed as desired by the deputies, and not as proposed by the bishops. Bishop White insisted that the Convention had no authority to reject the English Prayer Book as the basis for their revisions, adding that

its being the general opinion of the majority of the members of the late General Convention, will never justify me to my own conscience, in making it a ground for conduct. On the contrary, I hold it to be my duty to God and the Church to presume the opposite. . . .

Though he was a staunch defender of majority rule, it could not overthrow accepted truth. Another point that troubled him was that he seemed to be responsible for changes, like the one under discussion, which actually he had disapproved. It ought not to appear on the records that the bishops had approved of alterations, which they had in fact, opposed; "there should be no apparent, where there is no real responsibility." Of the points which he had reluctantly conceded, he wrote:

And although, in regard to the points given up, I shall think nothing of them, if, in the event, the great good should be accomplished, of having one service for the Church in these

states; yet I wish that the thing had been otherwise contrived as to that same responsibility.

Though uneasy under the new constitution in some ways, as he had confessed, Bishop White was satisfied in others. He wrote:

So far as the making of the bishops a separate house tended to conciliate our eastern brethren, I rejoice in it, as for the good of the Church. And so far as it lately gave me much of your company and conversation, I remember it with peculiar personal satisfaction. I think further, that on this plan, matters are more likely to be matured, than on that of a single house.<sup>57</sup>

This letter, revealing Bishop White's state of mind, epitomized the state of the Church at the end of the year 1789. There was no hint of regret at having entered into the new agreement; on the contrary, the letter is full of warmth and trust. But there was still much adjusting to be done. The union of the Anglican churches in America, achieved in 1789, was real and has endured. The controversial issues which had separated the two groups for so long, however, were not resolved at a single Convention. Three matters that were still unfinished at the end of 1789, have been so prominent in this study that they will be briefly traced to their conclusions: the adjustment of Episcopal minded Connecticut to a democratic form of ecclesiastical government; the correcting and completing of a Prayer Book satisfactory to all; and the uniting of the bishops resident in the United States in the first American consecration.

<sup>57</sup> White, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-160.



*The Form of Government for the Protestant  
Episcopal Church in the United  
States of America Completed*

I. ADJUSTMENTS IN CONNECTICUT (1790-94)

Although Bishop Seabury and his two clerical deputies had pledged their diocese to a union with the Church in the other states, Connecticut was still out of step. Having changed the political prayers and, in many churches, having adopted their bishop's communion office, the Connecticut clergy were opposed to any further revision of the English Prayer Book. In order to persuade them to adopt the American Prayer Book, Bishop Seabury postponed his clergy convocation until the new book had been published. He wanted his clergy to have copies in hand to examine before they were asked to ratify the changes approved by the General Convention. The convocation met at Newton, September 30, 1790.<sup>1</sup> Eighteen clergymen were present for the discussion of the American Prayer Book, as many as had been present at the Convention which had done the revising. The alterations were read and discussed. Then, the question of accepting them, and of ratifying the new church constitution, was put as follows: "Whether we confirm the doings of our Proctors in the General Convention at Philadelphia on the second day of October, 1789?" The affirmative vote won;

<sup>1</sup> The report given here is based on the account in Beardsley, *Seabury*, pp. 388-390.

only one man, the Rev. James Sayre, voting in the negative. Mr. Sayre insisted that his objections be recorded in full: that the new constitution "was repugnant to the true principles of Episcopal government"; that good Connecticut churchmen would dislike it; that it imperiled "all the sacred matters of the Church, her doctrines, discipline, liturgy, sacraments, rites, and offices." The next day he withdrew from the convocation, to campaign for his point of view. The convocation worked harmoniously without him. The problem was how to persuade the Connecticut laymen to accept the new constitution, canons, and liturgy. It was decided that each of the clergy should use whatever method he thought best for his own parish. In the interest of uniformity, it was agreed that, wherever there was a choice in the American Prayer Book, the form most like the English usage would be adopted. At the convocation of October, 1791, the clergy was forced to report a great diversity of practice, due to the strong opposition in Connecticut to any further changes. Not until 1794 did all the parishes agree to unite with the Protestant Episcopal Church of America in the use of the new Prayer Book.<sup>2</sup>

Another matter that troubled the Connecticut Church was the question of lay delegates. Though the Church Constitution had been so worded that lay representation was not required, it was quite evident that the other states believed it important. Apparently Bishop Seabury and his clergy considered the matter carefully, in fact for nearly three years.

<sup>2</sup> In 1792, the Rev. John Bowden tried to offset the divisive influence of the Rev. James Sayre by sending an address to the parish at Stratford, reproving them for continuing to oppose the proceedings of the General Convention of 1789. (*An Address from John Bowden, A.M. to the Members of the Episcopal Church in Stratford . . .* [New Haven: Printed by T. & S. Green, (1792?)] To which is added a letter from Mr. Bowden to the Rev. Mr. Sayre, dated March 13, 1792.) [Mass. Dio. Lib.] Due to Mr. Sayre, the parish at Stratford held out to 1793, and the parish at Woodbury to 1794. (Beardsley, *op. cit.*, pp. 412-414.)

Finally, on June 6, 1792, a convention was held in Trinity Church, New Haven—the first assembly of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut attended by both lay and clerical delegates.<sup>3</sup> Including the bishop, there were forty-five persons present, of whom twenty-four were laymen. Bishop Seabury noted in his journal that

on this day and the next the business of the Convention was happily finished, rules were agreed upon for the conduct of ecclesiastical affairs, respecting both clergy and laity, and Delegates were appointed to attend the General Convention at New York in September.<sup>4</sup>

Bishop White commented on his great satisfaction at finding lay delegates from Connecticut at the Convention of 1792. He recalled that:

The aversion entertained by the clergy in that state, to this part of the institution in the more southern, had been one of the principal impediments to an union: and when it was at last effected, it was with a latitude to them in this article.

He then pointed out the moral: "But the event ought to be noticed, as a proof that forbearance and mutual toleration are at least sometimes a shorter way to unity, than severity and stiffness."<sup>5</sup> One happy result of the Connecticut convention of 1792 was that the laity held a follow-up meeting of their own, to undertake to raise money for the support of the bishop.<sup>6</sup> The most important result was that from this time all the states met on a uniform basis of representation.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 414.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 415.

<sup>5</sup> White, *Memoirs*, p. 163.

<sup>6</sup> Beardsley, *op. cit.*, p. 415.

## II. COMPLETING THE AMERICAN PRAYER BOOK (1792-1801)

At the end of the General Convention of 1789, two matters connected with the American Prayer Book were still in a controversial state: the printing of the phrase "He descended into hell," and the ratification of the thirty-nine Articles. The General Convention of 1792 considered both points, the first having been challenged as incorrectly printed by Bishops Seabury and White, the second as incompleted business. Bishop White reported:

On the subject of the Prayer Book, there was nothing which could properly come before the convention without another review, and this was not intended, except the seeing that the book had been properly executed. In the correcting of anything amiss touching this matter, there could be no ground of difference, except in the article of the descent into hell. . . .<sup>7</sup>

A review by both houses of the Convention in 1792 resulted in a compromise of the first point. According to Bishop White

the result was the ordering of the creed to be printed in all future editions, with the article not in italics and between hooks as before; but with the rubric leaving the article to discretion to use or to omit it; or to use, instead of it, the words considered by the rubric as synonymous. Some such composition seemed to be rendered absolutely necessary by existing circumstances.<sup>8</sup>

The unfinished business of the adoption of the Thirty-nine Articles was then discussed. In 1789 Bishop White had been the only person to consider them important. Decision on the subject had been postponed, so that the deputies might

<sup>7</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

get instructions from their state conventions.<sup>9</sup> By 1792 Bishop White had gained considerable support in the House of Bishops. Of Bishop Seabury, he wrote:

On this occasion, he saw so clearly the inconveniences likely to result from there being no authoritative rule in the form of public confession, that he wished to adopt one, and as the author understood him, the code of the thirty-nine articles.

When the articles came up for discussion, Bishop Provoost was presiding, and the two new bishops were present: Bishop Madison of Virginia, and Bishop Claggett of Maryland. As president, Bishop Provoost was not expected to give his opinion, but Bishop White believed it was the same as Bishop Madison's, "who gave his opinion against articles altogether." Having just been consecrated, Bishop Claggett did not join in the discussion, but he voted with Bishop White, who reported: "His [Claggett's] sense was decidedly in favour of articles, as appeared also in his usual conversation on the subject."

Though there is no entry on the subject in the Journal of the House of Deputies for 1792, Bishop White recorded the following action. Being still undecided about the adoption of the articles, the deputies resolved that the matter be referred to a future Convention. In a conference between the two houses, the resolution was negatived by the House of Bishops by a three to one vote—Bishop Provoost not voting. Bishops Seabury, White, and Claggett wanted the articles ratified at once. The House of Bishops was promptly overruled. Bishop White explained that the bishops

by their negative vote, only showed their willingness to undertake the subject; for the postponement took place of course,

<sup>9</sup> The discussion of the Thirty-nine Articles that follows is found in White, *op. cit.*, pp. 166-167.

as the other house, immediately after the conference, determined to dismiss it for the present.<sup>10</sup>

The question of adopting the articles was again ignored by the Convention of 1795, but the Convention of 1799 was forced to take action on them because of pressure from the Connecticut deputies.<sup>11</sup> They insisted on discussing the subject, and tried to get some articles ratified then and there. The matter ended "with a proposed body of articles wholly new in form, edited with the journal," which appeared injudicious to Bishop White "as unsettling a present fixture, without any reasonable prospect of establishing a substitute."<sup>12</sup> This measure was never submitted to the House of Bishops, and stands in the Journal of the House of Deputies merely as proposed, but not as approved.<sup>13</sup> Actually, it helped Bishop White to get what he had wanted from the first, "by its showing of the improbability of agreement in a new form, and its thus contributing to the recognizing of the old articles."<sup>14</sup> After years of indecision, at the Convention of 1801, it was decided that the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, altered only where necessary because of the American form of government, were the most generally acceptable.<sup>15</sup> They were adopted then "without their altering of even the obsolete diction in them; but with notices of such changes as change of situation had rendered necessary."<sup>16</sup> The importance of the articles to Bishop White, he explained as follows:

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>11</sup> Bishop White wrote: "However moderate or uncertain Bishop Seabury was on the subject, the clergy and the laity of his diocese thought differently; as appeared in the convention of 1799, held not long after his decease." (*Ibid.*) Seabury died in 1796.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>13</sup> Perry, *Journals I*, 231.

<sup>14</sup> White, *op. cit.*

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179-187.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Throughout this Narrative, it must have appeared, that the object kept in view, in all the consultations held, and the determinations formed, was the perpetuating of the Episcopal Church, on the ground of the general principles which she had inherited from the Church of England; and of not departing from them, except so far as either local circumstances required, or some very important cause rendered proper. To those acquainted with the system of the Church of England, it must be evident, that the object here stated was accomplished on the ratification of the articles.<sup>17</sup>

### III. THE FIRST AMERICAN CONSECRATION (1792)

The General Convention of 1789 had officially requested the three bishops resident in the United States to unite in the consecration of the Rev. Edward Bass as Bishop of Massachusetts, but the prospect of persuading Bishops Seabury, White, and Provoost to act together was slim. Bishop Provoost continued to deny the validity of Bishop Seabury's orders, and Bishop White was determined to wait until there were three bishops in the English line in America. In spite of the fact that Bishop Seabury was eager to unite with the other two, there seemed no hope of an American consecration.

However, as Bishop White recorded, "the difficulty was not long after removed in another way by the convention of Virginia."<sup>18</sup> On May 7, 1790, the Virginia convention chose the Rev. James Madison, president of William and Mary College, to be their bishop, voting him a sum not to exceed £200 to defray his expenses. He left as soon as possible for England, and was consecrated in Lambeth Chapel on September 19, 1790.<sup>19</sup> Before the second General Convention of

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>19</sup> For the warrant for his consecration, cf. R. O. Salomon, "British Legislation and American Episcopacy," *Hist. Mag.*, XX (September, 1951), p. 290.

the Church met in 1792, he had served two years as Bishop of Virginia.

The next move came from Maryland. At a convention held in Annapolis in May, 1792, the Rev. Thomas John Claggett was elected Bishop of Maryland. In September, 1792, he arrived at the General Convention in New York, accompanied by clerical and lay deputies with the required documents of his election in hand. The deputies presented him to the House of Bishops, "requesting that his consecration might be expedited."<sup>20</sup> It was requested that all four American bishops unite in the act.<sup>21</sup> The Maryland delegation thus made explicit the need felt for a united episcopate, to insure the continuance of a united American Church.

Bishop White was completely satisfied with the proposal, which fulfilled his earlier suggestion.<sup>22</sup> The three bishops consecrated in England met the canonical requirements, and he had no objection to acting with Bishop Seabury, whose consecration he accepted as valid. But, there were objections. Bishop Madison had been urged by the Archbishop of Canterbury to see that Bishop Seabury was not included as a consecrator,<sup>23</sup> and Bishop Provoost was still antagonistic.

<sup>20</sup> Perry, *Journals*, I, 163.

<sup>21</sup> *Journal of the Proceedings of a Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland, May 31-June 2, 1792* (Baltimore, 1792), p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> White, Letter to Parker, August 6, 1787. (*Supra*, p. 298.) White later recorded that he wished to have three bishops of the English line, but that "being united in the act with a bishop who should consecrate through another line, would not weaken the English chain." (White, *Memoirs*, p. 163.)

<sup>23</sup> After his consecration and return to Virginia, Bishop Madison wrote to Bishop White: "A few days before I left London, the Archbishop requested a particular interview with me. He said he wished to express his hopes, and also to recommend to our Church, that, in such consecration as might take place in America, the persons who had received their powers from the Church of England should be *alone concerned*. He spoke with great delicacy of Dr. Seabury, but thought it most advisable that the line of Bishops should be handed down from those who had received their commission from the same source." (Madison, Letter to White, December 19, 1790. Quoted in C. I. Gibson, "Sketch of Our First Four Bishops," *Addresses and Historical Papers before the Centennial Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia, at its meetings in St. Paul's and St. John's Churches, in Richmond, May 20-24, 1885* (New York, 1885), p. 130.



When the General Convention met in New York in September, 1792, though Seabury had been in New York several times before, the two bishops had never exchanged visits. Bishop White and Dr. Smith were afraid to have them meet for the first time, when they took their seats in the House of Bishops, as:

The prejudices in the minds of the two bishops were such as threatened a distance between them; which would give an unfavorable appearance to themselves, and to the whole body, and might perhaps have an evil influence on their deliberations.<sup>24</sup>

It was arranged, with the consent of both bishops, that Bishop Seabury was to call on Bishop Provoost, who would receive him graciously. During the call, Bishop Provoost invited his visitant to dine that same day with him, with Bishop White and others. According to Bishop White, "The invitation was accepted; and from that time, nothing was perceived in either of them, which seemed to show, that the former distance was the result of anything else, but difference in opinion."<sup>25</sup>

Mutual distrust, however, is not so easily overcome. At the first meeting of the House of Bishops of the General Convention of 1792, trouble threatened. At the previous Convention, at which only Bishops Seabury and White had been present, it had been agreed that the senior bishop would always be president, "seniority to be reckoned from the dates of the Letters of Consecration."<sup>26</sup> In 1792, Bishops Provoost and Madison were present, both of whom objected to this rule of procedure. They preferred to have the presidency rotate, beginning from the north. In short, Bishop Seabury was to be replaced as president by Bishop Provoost.

<sup>24</sup> White, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-162.

<sup>25</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

<sup>26</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, I, 115.

As the vote was evenly divided, the rule would have stood as originally established, "but this might have been construed into an ungenerous advantage of the prior meeting; in which, those now in the negative had voices, and the others none."<sup>27</sup> The first day passed without incident, "the morning being principally occupied by religious service, and the convention not meeting in the afternoon." Before the opening of the Convention the next morning, Bishop Seabury asked for a private conference with Bishop White. The Connecticut bishop then

opened his mind to this effect—That from the course taken by the two other bishops on the preceding day, he was afraid they had in contemplation the debarring of him from any hand in the consecration, expected to take place during this convention . . . and that the apprehended measure, if proposed and perservered in, must be followed by an entire breach with him and as he supposed, with the Church under his superintendence.

Though he did not believe that the other two bishops had any such intention, Bishop White agreed to insist that Bishop Seabury be included in the act of consecration. Bishop Seabury, for his part, had no desire to insist on being president, unless the validity of his orders was being challenged. The two bishops entered into solemn agreement: Bishop Seabury was to absent himself from the morning session, so that when the revised rule of presidency was voted on Bishops Provoost and Madison would win. To protect Bishop Seabury, Bishop White

pledged himself, that in no event would he have a hand in the ensuing consecration, if it were to be accompanied by the rejection of Bishop Seabury's assistance in it. . . . Hands were given, in testimony of mutual consent in this design.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> The report here on these private conferences is based on White, *op. cit.*, pp. 162, 163.

<sup>28</sup> White, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

The plan worked as foreseen: Bishop Provoost became the president of the House of Bishops for the session then convened,<sup>29</sup> and Bishop Seabury was included in the first consecration of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America. On September 17, 1792, in Trinity Church, New York, in the presence of the churchmen assembled for the General Convention, the Rev. Thomas John Claggett was consecrated to be Bishop of Maryland, Bishops Provoost, White, Madison, and Seabury uniting as consecrators.<sup>30</sup> In this joint act of the two lines of bishops, the American Episcopate was established, and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States was firmly united. The work of reorganization was completed. Of this great event, Bishop Seabury wrote in his journal:

At this Convention, Right Reverend Dr. Claggett, of Maryland, was consecrated bishop, in Trinity Church, by Bishops Provoost, White, Madison, and Seabury. All glory be ascribed to God for his goodness to his Church in the American States. In his goodness I confide for the continuing of that holy Episcopate which is now begun to be communicated in this country. May it redound to his glory, and the good of his Church, through Jesus Christ. Amen.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> In 1804 the Convention restored the original rule, that the senior bishop present should preside, which remained in force for 115 years. In 1919 the office became elective. (C. Rankin Barnes, "The Presiding Bishops of the Church," *Hist. Mag.*, XVIII [June, 1949], pp. 102, 103 and 130.)

<sup>30</sup> Perry, *op. cit.*, I, 164. The request for the consecration of the Rev. Edward Bass was in the Convention records, but the Church in Massachusetts and New Hampshire was weak, and the leaders, like Dr. Parker, having precipitated the issue, were content to see it fulfilled through other agents. Bass was not consecrated until 1797. (Beardsley, *op. cit.*, p. 456.)

<sup>31</sup> Beardsley, *op. cit.*, p. 424.

## *Conclusion*

THE form of government of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America has endured essentially as established in the period surveyed in this study. The characteristics which distinguish it from other members of the Anglican Communion are rooted in the formative years of 1780-1789. They emerged, for the most part, as the practical results of the concept of democracy in government, and of the principle of the complete separation of church and state. Three innovations, accepted in the process of reorganization, are still vital in the American Church, and still in marked contrast to the government of the Church of England.<sup>1</sup>

Before the end of the Revolutionary War, it was evident that the American Church must break with the English politico-ecclesiastical system. The organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church today is essentially the same as that suggested by Bishop White in 1782. It is entirely free of state control. Not Parliament, but its own representative General Convention constitutes its final legislative body. The basic unit in the government of the Church is not the diocese as in England, but the parish. Every parish sends repre-

<sup>1</sup> The interrelation of the churches that are part of the Anglican Communion sometimes seems vague and complicated. For clarification on the relation between the Protestant Episcopal Church of America and the Church of England, the reader is referred to a recent article: Richard G. Salomon, "Mother Church—Daughter Church—Sister Church: The Relations of the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Church of England in the 19th Century," *Hist. Mag.*, XXI (December, 1952), 417-447.

sentatives to its annual diocesan conventions, at which diocesan representatives to the triennial General Conventions are elected. Thus, every parish is represented in the General Conventions, by which the Church is governed. The principles of the separation of church and state and of representative government, accepted in 1789, are still fundamental in the Protestant Episcopal Church of America.

Another break with the English system, which was seen to be necessary early in the period of reorganization and which has been retained, was the change in the status of bishops. By the time of the consecration of Bishop Seabury in 1784, it was evident that his authority would have to be purely ecclesiastical. Unlike the English bishops, American bishops have no political power or prestige. Each one is elected by the church members of a specific region, solely to supervise and administer their ecclesiastical affairs. At the national level, the authority of the bishops in England is limited by the other members of the Church, just as the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops (first set up in 1789) continue to check one another at each General Convention. No bishop in the Protestant Episcopal Church has any authority over his fellow bishops, as do the English archbishops. The Presiding Bishop of the American Church is still essentially, as in 1789, the bishop selected to preside over the House of Bishops. The power and prestige of each American bishop lies in his control of the affairs of the Church in his own diocese. The purely ecclesiastical bishop, considered an impossibility in 1772, but a necessity in 1784, is a continuing reality today.

The third innovation adopted by the Protestant Episcopal Church during the period of reorganization, which has remained a vital part of the American Church, is the principle of lay representation. In England, Parliament, with members of varying religious affiliations, exerts a secular check on clerical power at the national level, because of its

legislative authority over the Church of England. In America, the laity are represented at every level of church government. Through a vestry, they exercise control in each individual parish. Usually they own the church property and select their own clergy, whose salary depends on their voluntary contributions—though no parish can call or retain any clergyman without the approval of their bishop. The laity, however, have a voice in the selection of the man who is to be their bishop. Their vote, as well as that of the clergy, is necessary to his election. They are also represented at the diocesan level in the unique American institution of the standing committee, started in the period of reorganization as a practical necessity. Today, though differing in importance in the daily life of the Church in different dioceses, each standing committee is potentially powerful. Since 1789, every diocese has been required to have one: to inform and advise the bishop on matters of importance to the diocese and, in the absence of a bishop, to serve as the interim ecclesiastical head of the diocese. At the national level, lay representatives still have a voice in all legislation affecting the Church as a whole, voting jointly with the clergy in the House of Deputies at every General Convention. The principle of lay representation, so bitterly contested from 1780 to 1789, is no longer an issue. It is now taken for granted that the laity and the clergy have joint responsibility for the local, diocesan, and national government of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.

The differences between the Church of England and the American Church are almost entirely in their forms of government. To this day, English doctrine and beliefs are accepted and followed in the American Church. The Protestant Episcopal Church has developed no great theologians, but continues to defer to English thought. The American Prayer Book has incorporated a minimum amount of change, much of which was due to political necessity. In accepting

primitive usage as the criterion for every revision, the American churchmen have again followed the way of the Church of England.

Three emphases in the Protestant Episcopal Church especially reflect the Church of England. The first is the stress on the continuity of the Church through the ages. During the period of reorganization, the leaders of the Church of England in the United States were unwilling to establish a new, independent Church. Like the English at the time of the Reformation, they were determined to maintain the continuity of the Church. On the practical side, the sign of the unbroken connection between the two Churches was the recognition by the States of the right of the Protestant Episcopal Churches to the property formerly belonging to the Church of England. Ecclesiastically, continuity depended on the securing of an episcopate accepted as valid by the English bishops. Seabury stressed the importance of an immediate consecration in the apostolic succession, and White stressed the importance of the approval of the English bishops. Both wanted and worked for an American Church which would be continuous with the primitive Church through the Church of England.

A second emphasis derived from the Church of England is the stress on unity. Neither the absence of an establishment nor the existence of other denominations has destroyed the Anglican concept of the relation of the Church to the community. Every nation has two needs: the civil government provides for its physical welfare, and the Church for its spiritual. A divided Church is as much of a catastrophe as a divided state. The dread of schism, the determination to have one united Church in America, was an important factor in the successful organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States in 1789.

The third emphasis is on diversity. While insisting on the importance of one Church for each national group, the

Church of England includes a variety of interpretations and practices within its fold. In the organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, Bishop Seabury and Bishop White represented different points of view. Seabury stressed the Catholic, and White the Protestant tradition of the Church of England. Both were important. Dr. Smith helped to maintain a balance by vacillating between the two views. Some of the less famous men of the period had a better grasp within themselves of the two-fold stress of the Anglican position. For example, Abraham Beach, Benjamin Moore, and Samuel Parker acted as mediators and interpreters between the two extremes, holding firmly to values which they knew to be indispensable from both traditions. The insights of all these men were needed to maintain in the American Church the Catholic-Protestant tradition of the Church of England.

The struggles of the years 1780-1789 ended in real achievement. In 1789, the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America was established with a new form of government suited to its new political situation, but universally recognized as continuous in thought and feeling with the Church of England.



## *Catalogue of Correspondence*

This catalogue lists, alphabetically by correspondent, all correspondence cited in the text by correspondent, addressee, and date. The statement in brackets gives the location of the unpublished items, and for the published items the printed source.

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